

SECTION B

CONSULTATION AND SCRUTINY REPORTING

B1	Community engagement	44
B2	Internal and external scrutiny	57
B3	Legislative Assembly committee inquiries and reports	60
B4	Legislative report	87

B1 Community engagement

The Directorate undertakes a range of community engagement activities through community consultation processes, stakeholder relations and community partnership programs. The Directorate's community engagement activities are aligned with the ACT Government's Community Engagement initiative.

The Director-General and other senior Directorate staff meet on a regular basis with the executive of the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations (P&C Associations), the Australian Education Union, the Catholic Education Office, the Association of Independent Schools and the ACT Principals' Association to discuss key issues and progress on major initiatives.

Major consultation/advisory groups

Government and non-government schools education councils

The operation of the Government Schools Education Council and the Non-government Schools Education Council provides ongoing community consultation about public and non-government school education. These councils provide an opportunity for the community to have an important role in formulating advice to government on school education policy. Membership on both councils consists of community and education members representing significant stakeholder groups. The Directorate provides secretariat support for these councils including compilation of their annual reports which are annexed to this report.

As required under the *Education Act 2004* (the Act), the Non-Government Education Section of the Directorate publishes a notice in a daily newspaper of all applications pertaining to the in-principle approval for a new non-government school or non-government school expansion, or registration of a new non-government school, campus or additional year level.

Table B1.1: Consultation on non-government schools

Project	Consultation process	Groups/individuals	Approximate number consulted	Outcome
Non-government school registration processes: in-principle approval of Catholic Education Office proposal to develop a secondary campus in Gungahlin	Call for community comment; published notice in Canberra Times; comment from key stakeholders	Community members; Non-government Schools Education Council; Association of Independent Schools; Independent Education Union; Australian Education Union; Planning and Performance Branch	20 community comments received; five stakeholders commented	Consultation provided to assist Minister's decision to approve or not approve proposed secondary campus

Source: Information, Communications and Governance Branch

School boards

The Act requires each public school to have a school board as a way of sharing authority and responsibility with the local school community. The Act caters for general school boards, boards at school-related institutions (such as the early childhood schools) and boards of schools to which special circumstances apply (such as Telopea Park School). Most public schools have general school boards consisting of the principal, an appointed member representing the general public, two staff members, three parents and citizens members, two student members (high schools and colleges) and up to two board appointed members. All appointments, apart from board appointed members, are made by the Directorate's Returning Officer on behalf of the Director-General.

The Act details the functions of public school boards including establishing the strategic direction and priorities for the school; monitoring and reviewing school performance; oversight of curriculum, educational, financial and resource-related policies; developing relationships between the school and the community; encouraging parent participation in student learning; and developing recommendations to the Director-General.

During the reporting period, the Directorate provided training and support to schools in the establishment and operation of their school boards in accordance with the requirements of the Act. This involved:

- revision of the *School Board Manual* to assist school board members to clarify roles and responsibilities and to provide information about school board operations
- training to assist Assistant Returning Officers to prepare for school board elections and reduce administrative burden for principals

- training tailored to meet the needs of school board members and school board chairs, including online resources
- coordination of the School Board Chairs Network designed to provide an information and networking opportunity for school board chairs or a representative and principals
- providing information and support to new principals about managing school board processes
- coordination of the declaration of conflict of interest statements from each public school for the Director-General
- introduction of a selection process for appointed members to school boards in line with the recommendations of the Review of School Based Management. Nominees for the position of appointed member are asked to outline skills and experience and are selected to align with the requirements of the school board
- supporting principals and school board chairs to deal with operational issues and attending school board meetings as required
- consulting with principals to ensure that the composition of the school board meets the needs of the school community
- supporting schools to use the board appointed member to enhance the skill set and expertise of school boards.

During the reporting period, the Directorate completed legislative changes to the school boards of the Murrumbidgee Education and Training Centre and Birrigai School to ensure that the composition of the school boards meets the governance needs of the local communities. Consultation also commenced in relation to the composition of the school boards of the early childhood schools and the University of Canberra schools.

Table B1.2: Consultation on School Board Manual

Project	Consultation process	Groups/ individuals	Approximate number consulted	Outcome
School Board Manual	Request for comment in relation to draft School Board Manual	School-based and central office staff, Directorate Executive, Principals, School Boards, ACT Council of P&C Associations, ACT Electoral Commission	Approximately 6,100	All feedback considered and a decision made to accept or not accept changes. Manual updated in line with accepted feedback. Manual approved and circulated in December 2010

Source: Information, Communications and Governance Branch

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Group

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Group (ATSIECG) continued to meet regularly throughout 2010-11, providing community advice on matters relating to education and training services and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT, including Jervis Bay and the Wreck Bay Aboriginal community.

ATSIECG was active in participating in a diverse range of consultations to ensure the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were represented. Examples of these include five of the nine members attending workshops organised by Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority to provide comment on the content of curriculum documents and two members participating in a working group to develop the *Reconciliation Matters: Reconciliation Action Plan 2010-2011*.

In 2010, ATSIECG developed an operational plan that articulated three priorities for 2010-12. These priorities aim to increase involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and carers in curriculum and policy advice; attendance at ATSIECG meetings; and develop a communication strategy. Information on opportunities for parents and carers is available at <http://www.actatsiecg.org>

ACT Safe Schools Taskforce

The Safe Schools Taskforce continued to meet regularly during 2010-11 to discuss and develop innovative solutions to address ongoing and emerging school safety concerns and to provide a forum to discuss concerns raised by stakeholders, the Minister and the community relating to school safety.

The taskforce is made up of representatives from the Directorate, Catholic Education Office, ACT Association of Independent Schools, ACT Policing, Youth Advisory Council, ACT Principals' Association, unions, school parent associations, Canberra Preschool Society and the Human Rights Commission. In 2010 the taskforce reviewed its focus and developed terms of reference which were adopted in February 2011.

During 2010 the taskforce investigated the impact of cyber bullying on students. This led to a student summit 'Who R U in the Digital World' held on the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence on 18 March 2011.

Disability Education Reference Group

The Disability Education Reference Group (DERG) is a community consultative forum convened by the Director-General. The reference group provides an opportunity for the community to fulfill an important role in formulating advice to the Directorate on the education of students with disabilities in ACT public schools.

The group met regularly throughout the reporting period and had significant involvement in providing feedback during the development of the Directorate's *Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools: Strategic Plan 2010-2013*.

One of the key actions in this plan was the refinement of the role and terms of reference of the group and this was completed at the beginning of 2011.

The formation of the Parent/Carer Sub-Committee is helping to achieve the goal of supporting students through developing stronger and positive partnerships between schools and families. The sub-committee provides direct feedback to and consults with parents on initiatives in disability education.

Major community consultations

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultation

Major community consultations were undertaken to develop two key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander strategic plans, the *Reconciliation Matters: Reconciliation Action Plan 2010-2011* and the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Matters: Strategic Plan 2010-2013*.

Table B1.3: Consultation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters

Project	Consultation process	Groups/ individuals	Approximate number consulted	Outcome
Reconciliation Matters: Reconciliation Action Plan 2010-2011	Representatives of ATSIECG were members of the Working Group. Three community meetings held	ATSIECG members, parents and carers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	25	Participants supported Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). ATSIECG supported RAP for launch by the Minister in July 2010
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Matters: Strategic Plan 2010-2013	Two meetings with ATSIECG One meeting with Chairperson, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body. Focus groups with Central Office and Principal Groups	ATSIECG members, parents and carers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Directors and Managers, School Principals, School Network Leaders, Executive Director School Improvement	40	Participants supported Strategic Plan. Plan launched by Minister in September 2010

Source: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Student Support Branch

Engaging young people in education and training options

In September 2010 the Australian and ACT Governments worked together to arrange an ACT Youth Attainment and Transitions Regional Forum to bring the ACT Partnerships Broker and ACT Youth Connections providers together with key stakeholders in the ACT region.

The ACT Youth Attainment and Transitions Regional Forum gave participants the opportunity to share information and best practice, network with other key stakeholders in the region and also look to future challenges and opportunities for engaging young people in education and training options.

The ACT Youth Commitment Signing Ceremony and launch of the Pathways Plan took place on 18 May 2011. Over 140 ACT agencies signed a Statement of Commitment, to ensure that the transfer of a young person from one agency to another happens effectively. It is the responsibility of an agency to know where a young person is and what is happening to support them so that no young person is lost from education, training or employment.

The ACT Youth Commitment establishes a new set of expectations for ACT schools and the community regarding young people's experience in schooling and their transitions onto further education, training and work.

Table B1.4: Consultation on engaging young people in education and training

Project	Consultation process	Groups/ individuals	Approximate number consulted	Outcome
ACT Youth Attainment and Transitions Regional Forum	Regional forum	ACT Community Services Directorate, Youth Coalition of the ACT, ACT and Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry, University of Canberra, Canberra Institute of Technology, Association of Private Training Services, Australian Council for Private Education and Training, ACT Health, Association of Independent Schools, Catholic Education Office, Australian Federal Police, Anglicare Canberra, Canberra Business Council, ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations	165	Connecting the agencies and stakeholders who provide services and programs for young people in the ACT to share information and best practice, and look to future challenges and opportunities. To inform strategic direction in regards to meeting ACT targets and objectives under the ACT Youth Attainment and Transitions National Partnership and ACT Youth Commitment

Project	Consultation process	Groups/ individuals	Approximate number consulted	Outcome
ACT Youth Commitment Signing Ceremony and Pathways Plan launch	Signing Ceremony and Pathways Planning launch	Representatives from public and non-government schools, Canberra Institute of Technology, Registered Training Organisations and other educational institutions, community and youth agencies, business and government agencies	140 agencies	140 agencies signed a Statement of Commitment, pledging to ensure that the goals of the ACT Youth Commitment are met, including working towards no young person in the ACT being lost from education, training or employment

Source: Information, Communications and Governance Branch

Vocational education and training community consultation

The Directorate is committed to maintaining regular and effective communication and engagement with the vocational education and training (VET) community. In December 2010, the Directorate initiated the VET Forums, quarterly meetings between the Directorate and VET stakeholders. This approach is part of an overall communication strategy which is designed to deliver consistent, clear and transparent outcomes, and includes a streamlined process with the web as the focal point, and quarterly stakeholder forums. These forums are designed to provide a face-to-face opportunity for stakeholders to engage with staff, to learn of emerging issues and to provide feedback on matters arising in implementing requirements of them as ACT VET stakeholders. To date, two forums have been held, each with over 100 stakeholders in attendance. Participants are from Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) both public and private, Group Training Organisations (GTOs), Australian Apprenticeship Centres (AACs) and members of industry and industry associations. Topics covered to date include updates on the emerging VET environment, proposed changes to contracts between the Directorate and contractors, web communication, new initiatives and updates on changes to requirements and Directorate systems.

Table B1.5: Consultation on vocational education and training

Project	Consultation process	Groups/ individuals	Approximate number consulted	Outcome
VET forums	Two stakeholder forums	RTOs, GTOs, AACs, Industry organisations and associations	Approximately 100 at each forum	Implementation of a Strategic Communication Plan including a hands-on workshop on web consultation processes; advisory sessions on requirements for funding initiatives; commitment to a two-way communication process

Source: Training and Tertiary Education Branch

Schools capital works

In the reporting period, stakeholder consultation continued on the designs for a number of new schools, new capital works school enhancement projects, and on the projects funded under the Australian Government's Building the Education Revolution (BER) program.

Table B1.6: Consultation on schools capital works

Project	Consultation process	Groups/ Individuals	Approximate number consulted	Outcome
Namadgi School (formally the Kambah P-10 School)	Meetings and community presentations	Urambi School community; prospective students and their families; Cabinet in the Community	Varied between meetings and presentation sessions	Finalisation of secondary school design and completion of project
Harrison Secondary School	Regular meetings	Harrison School representatives	Numbers varied between meetings and presentations generally two representatives from the school; principal and business manager	Construction commenced 18 June 2010 with proposed completion in December 2011

Project	Consultation process	Groups/ Individuals	Approximate number consulted	Outcome
Gungahlin College	Community presentations	Cabinet in the Community meetings	Numbers varied between meetings and presentation sessions	Presentation of college design and building form
Bonner Primary School	Meetings and community consultations	Design Working Group (DWG - representatives from education community, union, special interest groups); Gungahlin Community Council; Harrison School community	36 members invited to DWG. Number of attendances varied for each meeting	Finalisation of design for Bonner Primary School
Franklin Early Childhood School	Meetings and community presentations	DWG; Gungahlin Community Council	Varied between meetings and presentation sessions	Consultation concluded with presentation of the school designs
Building the Education Revolution program	Meetings	School communities; school principals and staff; school boards; P&C Associations; Cabinet in the Community	All ACT public schools	Design for 84 National School Pride projects and 68 Primary Schools for the 21st Century projects
Building the Education Revolution program	Meetings	School principals and project managers	All ACT public schools	Completion and handover of 84 National School Pride projects and 68 Primary Schools for the 21 Century projects. Defect liability period sign off and finalisation expenditure of funds
Canberra College - Performing Arts Centre	DWG	Theatre consultants, school executive, specialist teachers, acoustic engineers	Varied depending on issue or speciality	Project is at construction stage and accommodates essential aspects of original brief

Project	Consultation process	Groups/ Individuals	Approximate number consulted	Outcome
Red Hill School expansion	Meetings and school consultations	School principal and design consultants on the Red Hill School works; French Australian Preschool (FAPS) representatives on the separation of facilities; Local community consultation on traffic and parking study	Four Red Hill School executive members on Red Hill extension; school informed the school community FAPS principal on separation works tasks. Consultant advisor on land separation; various groups on parking and traffic, including local services	Completion of designs for extension and refurbishment works; completion of separation of FAPS facilities; final report on precinct traffic and parking issues
Ngunnawal Primary School - new classroom pod	Meetings	School principal and executive staff. School provided information to school community and affected residents	Three school staff	Design for new teaching unit, construction has commenced and is due to be completed in August 2011

Source: Schools Capital Works Branch

Community partnership programs

National partnerships

The three education sectors (public, Catholic and independent) in the ACT continue to collaboratively progress and implement National Partnership reforms.

A cross-sector symposium was held in June 2010 to discuss potential models for innovative School Centres of Teacher Education Excellence in the ACT. Attendees included principals, school leaders and teachers from the three education sectors, senior lecturers from the University of Canberra and the Australian Catholic University and representatives from the Australian and Independent education unions. Outcomes from the symposium informed the next stage of planning by the Teacher Education Committee on potential models to be considered for implementation.

All National Partnership schools have put considerable work into external partnerships. Some schools have strengthened or extended the scope of existing partnerships, and a number of new relationships have been developed. These external partnerships are aimed at creating opportunities for students and/or supporting student engagement, parent/community involvement and providing support to students and their parents/carers.

During 2011, schools participating in the Low Socio Economic Status National Partnership have invested heavily in parent/school community involvement. Schools have developed a range of programs and initiatives in cooperation with community groups such as local Community Health Centres, and higher education authorities such as the Canberra Institute of Technology and University of Canberra. Through these partnerships, schools have supplemented student support to enable participation in a range of activities to enhance educational experiences.

School-community partnerships

Community-based partnerships are important to the social and economic sustainability of the ACT. Businesses and organisations supporting children and young people involved in community activities contribute to the smooth functioning of the ACT community. Partnerships between schools and community groups and businesses help schools to respond effectively to the educational needs of, and opportunities presented by, school communities.

The Directorate has a number of specific partnership programs with ACT community groups and leaders who support public education. These include ACT Children's Week, the School Volunteer Program, the Returned and Services League of Australia Woden Valley Sub-Branch Incorporated, the United Nations, School Volunteer Program ACT Incorporated and the Australian Business Community Network.

Partnership programs are primarily focused at the primary, secondary and college levels, with limited programs and/or services being directly targeted to preschools. Current partnership programs available to preschools are generally coordinated in conjunction with the Community Services Directorate, including programs such as National Child Protection Week.

In 2010 two ACT schools won \$25,000 each in the national Schools First competition for innovative approaches to community partnerships. Melba Copland Secondary School is setting up a partnership to channel the energies and enthusiasm of students towards trade training in painting and decorating. Fraser Primary School is setting up a literacy improvement scheme with community volunteers and pre-service teachers from the University of Canberra to work with students identified as below the reading benchmarks. The \$50,000 Schools First ACT Impact Award 2010 was jointly awarded to Lake Ginninderra College (now renamed as University of Canberra Senior Secondary College, Lake Ginninderra) and the Faculty of Education at the University of Canberra. The partnership enables pre-service undergraduate teachers to learn on the job and for classroom teachers to work collaboratively with beginning teachers to enhance student learning outcomes. The partnership not only strengthens teaching and learning initiatives at the college but also allows for educators from the college and the university to share resources, strategies, research and practice.

Social media

The Directorate continues to provide the community with updates on public school activities, programs and services via the ACT Public Schools Facebook page. Since the inception of the page in mid-2009 the number of people who have nominated the Facebook page as part of their social network is approaching 500. A number of public schools are also using Facebook and Twitter social media sites to extend communication options with school communities.

Canberra Careers Market

During August 2010 the annual Canberra Careers Market was convened with over 8,000 students from both the ACT and NSW in attendance. The Canberra Careers Market has been running for nearly 30 years and is led by a strong partnership between the Directorate and the Rotary Club of Canberra City.

Complaints resolution

The Directorate values the feedback it receives from parents and the community and is committed to responding in a positive way to complaints made about its operations, services or service delivery.

The Community Liaison Section was established in April 2010 to address complaints and concerns received from the community and to ensure a consistent approach to complaints management across the Directorate. The section has two centralised complaints information officers and all schools and branches of the Directorate have a designated complaints officer.

The Directorate aims to resolve complaints at the school or local level wherever possible, and complainants are encouraged to initially raise their concerns informally with the school or relevant member of staff. Where appropriate, the Community Liaison Section can assist in facilitating a resolution; however, the Directorate acknowledges that not all concerns and complaints are able to be resolved informally.

Where a formal complaint is made, it is handled under the provisions of the Directorate's *Complaints Resolution* policy. The policy outlines the principles for management of complaints and provides information about timeframes, processes and a complainant's right to ask for a review of the response received if they are not satisfied. It does not cover complaints made by members of staff about matters associated with their employment, which are dealt with through procedures outlined in industrial agreements. The policy is available at all public schools and on the Directorate's website.

Complaints concerning child abuse and neglect are referred to the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support within the Community Services Directorate.

In addition to responding to complaints and concerns from the community, the Community Liaison Section records and analyses data on complaints received and recommends improvement to policies and service delivery.

Other complaints avenues

The Directorate may, under a range of administrative law provisions, receive complaints through external complaints agencies.

The *Public Interest Disclosure Act 1994* (see **Section C3**) contains provisions for reporting wrongdoing in the ACT Public Service.

Formal complaints

Data on formal complaints lodged with the Directorate from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011 is summarised in Table B1.7 below. Two formal complaints remained open as at 30 June 2011.

Table B1.7: Complaints, 2010-11

Complainant	Bullying/ violence	Communication	Personal conduct	Policy and procedures	Service provision	Total
Parent/carer	3	4	2	5	0	14
Community member	0	0	1	1	1	3
Student	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	3	4	3	6	1	17

Source: Information, Communications and Governance Branch

For more information contact:

Director

Information, Communications and Governance

(02) 6205 7661

B2 Internal and external scrutiny

The Directorate's activities are subject to scrutiny through a range of processes. These include our internal corporate governance and auditing processes and through parliamentary committees, courts, administrative tribunals, the ACT Auditor-General's Office, the ACT Ombudsman, the Human Rights Commissioner and the Privacy Commissioner.

Internal scrutiny

The Directorate has strong organisational controls in place to maintain an appropriate level of internal scrutiny and to support its legislative functions, objectives and performance targets.

Core governance arrangements including management accountability processes are supplemented by strong internal audit and risk management functions and the role of the Senior Executive responsible for Business Integrity Risk.

Each of these aspects of security is discussed in other sections of this annual report as detailed below:

- corporate governance framework in **Section C5**
- fraud control and management in **Section C2**
- internal audit and risk management in **Section C1**
- financial reporting and accountabilities in **Section A6**.

External scrutiny

External reviews, appeals and complaints

The Directorate's Legal, Liaison and Regulation Section coordinates responses to complaints made under a range of administrative law and human rights provisions. These include:

- *Ombudsman Act 1989* (ACT) regarding administrative actions
- *Human Rights Commission Act 2005* (ACT) regarding the provision of education services
- *Discrimination Act 1991* (ACT)
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Commonwealth)
- *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Act 1986* (Commonwealth)
- *Privacy Act 1988* (Commonwealth).

During the reporting period the Directorate received 14 new inquiries under these legislative provisions: seven of these remain on-going; six were resolved; one was withdrawn by the complainant.

The ACT Human Rights Commission closed three of these matters as being dealt with to the Commissioner's satisfaction. The ACT Ombudsman closed two matters, deciding no further investigation was warranted.

Two matters had remained unresolved from previous reporting periods. One matter was resolved by the ACT Human Rights Commission through conciliation. In respect of the other matter, the ACT Ombudsman recorded a finding of administrative deficiency. The Directorate responded to this finding including reviewing all policies to ensure that consideration is given to whether a request for a review of an identified action should also prompt action under the Directorate's general complaints handling process.

Protection orders

Four applications (on behalf of schools) were made to the Magistrate's court for workplace protection orders during 2010-11.

Privacy

There were no privacy complaints received during 2010-11.

External audits

The Auditor-General's Office (Audit Office) is an observer on the Directorate's Audit Committee. During the year, the Audit Office provided regular reports to the Committee.

The Audit Office issued an unqualified audit report on the Directorate's 2009-10 Financial Report and a qualified Report of Factual Findings on its 2009-10 Statement of Performance because one of the performance indicators was not measured as per the requirements of the *Financial Management Act 1996*.

The Auditor-General's reports recommended an external review of the Directorate's internal audit function. The external review commenced on 28 June 2010 and concluded in August 2010. All recommendations from the external review were accepted by the Director-General.

All recommendations from the Audit Office reports in 2009-10 have been addressed. The Auditor-General's Office assessed the Directorate's overall control environment to be strong.

Table B2.1: External audits conducted by the Auditor-General's Office, 2010-11

Nature of inquiry/ report title	Recommendations/ outcome of inquiry	Response to the outcome of inquiry
<p>2009-10 Financial Audits</p> <p>Report number: 10/2010</p> <p>Tabled: 21 December 2010</p>	<p>The Audit Office issued an unqualified audit report on the Directorate's 2009-10 Financial Report and a qualified Report of Factual Findings on its 2009-10 Statement of Performance.</p> <p>The Audit Office recommended improvements to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Directorate's methods for measuring performance indicators as required by the <i>Financial Management Act 1996</i>, the timeliness and accuracy of internal reporting regarding the entry to, and exit from, the Directorate's early childhood intervention program. 	<p>The Directorate agreed with the recommendations and undertook the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an improved methodology to collect, verify and report on performance measures improved timeliness and accuracy of internal reporting regarding the entry to and exit from the Directorate's early childhood intervention program.
<p>2009-10 Financial Statements Computer Information Systems - MAZE Application</p> <p>Report number: 22/2010</p> <p>Tabled: 3 December 2010</p>	<p>The Audit Office considered the adequacy of controls over computer information systems that affect the reliability of the financial statements.</p> <p>The Audit Office recommended the Directorate develop and implement a change management policy for the MAZE application and review users' access to the MAZE application that can be verified by adequate supporting documentation.</p>	<p>The Directorate agreed with the recommendations and used the information to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop, implement and monitor an appropriate change management policy for the MAZE application implement an education process on appropriate access to the MAZE application based on users' needs and develop a process of quarterly reviews and reports for monitoring.

Source: Information, Communications and Governance Branch

For more information contact:

Director

Information, Communications and Governance

(02) 6205 7661

B3 Legislative Assembly committee inquiries and reports

The Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs (the Committee) and the Select Committee on Estimates 2011-2012 (the Select Committee) conduct inquiries and prepare reports on issues relevant to operational and strategic functions of the Directorate.

The Committee finalised and tabled two reports relating to the 2009-10 financial year. The ACT Government responded to these reports during 2010-11. ACT Government responses to the Committee reports are available at <http://www.parliament.act.gov.au>

- Report 3: *Inquiry into the Educational Achievement Gap in the ACT*, presented on 6 May 2010. The government response was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 17 August 2010.
- Report 4: *Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2008-2009*, presented on 6 May 2010. The government response was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 24 August 2010.

The Committee finalised and tabled two reports relating to the 2010-11 financial year.

- Report 5: *Needs of ACT Students with a Disability*, presented on 21 October 2010. The government response was tabled on 15 February 2011.
- Report 6: *Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2009-2010*, presented on 5 May 2011. The government response will be prepared and tabled during the 2011-12 financial year.

The Select Committee finalised and tabled one report during 2010-11: *Report on Appropriation Bill 2011-2012*. The report was presented on 21 June 2011.

The Select Committee on Estimates 2010-2011 presented its *Report on Appropriation Bill 2010-2011* on 22 June 2010. The Directorate reported the government response in the Annual Report 2009-10. The Directorate implementation is reported in this section.

Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs

Report 3: *Inquiry into the Educational Achievement Gap in the ACT*

Presented 6 May 2010

The ACT Government response to the *Inquiry into the Educational Achievement Gap in the ACT* was provided to the Assembly on 17 August 2011. The Directorate responded to 24 recommendations.

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
1. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide pre-service training or professional development for teachers in interpreting standardised testing results.	Agreed	The School Improvement Division offers professional development to all teachers in interpreting NAPLAN and PIPS results.
2. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that teachers are aware and able to access expert advice and services to support them in adapting their pedagogical practice to suit the different educational needs of their students.	Agreed	<p>The Directorate continues to provide support for teachers in adapting their pedagogical practice through the Quality Teaching model (QTm). Whilst the QTm consultants have concluded their work, Curriculum Support Officers work across all sectors to increase teacher understanding of the elements involved in the QTm.</p> <p>The Directorate has been supporting teachers through workshops and visits to schools to continue to differentiate curriculum content as well as pedagogy and assessment, to best meet student needs. The purpose of curriculum differentiation is to offer students multiple and varied avenues to learning in order to provide equity and excellence in the classroom.</p> <p>Literacy and Numeracy Coordinators and the Field Officers have been in their schools for 12 months. These programs are proving successful and will be continued.</p> <p>In order to support the needs of all students with high academic ability, including our most gifted and talented students, the development of a Virtual Learning Academy (VLA) is being investigated. It is envisaged that the VLA will provide an online integrated framework for differentiated educational provision to suit high ability and gifted and talented students.</p>

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
3. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training provide to the Legislative Assembly an analysis of ACT NAPLAN results using comparable 2008 and 2009 NAPLAN data from NSW and Victorian urban schools.	Agreed in part	<p>It is not possible to analyse ACT NAPLAN results against the performance of comparable 2008 and 2009 NAPLAN data from NSW and Victorian urban schools as the Directorate does not have access to NAPLAN data from other jurisdictions. Each year the NAPLAN National Report provides achievement data disaggregated by geolocation, providing comparison of the performance of ACT students to the performance of students classified as attending metropolitan¹ schools in other jurisdictions. These data show that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in 2008, 2009 and 2010 the performance of ACT students in reading and numeracy across years 3, 5, 7 and 9 was with few exceptions, similar to that of students attending metropolitan schools in NSW and Victoria • performance by ACT students in writing relative to the performance of students in NSW and Victoria has improved from 2008 to 2010, with ACT students achieving at levels similar to those in NSW and Victoria in 2010. <p>1 Metropolitan- Capital cities and urban centres with a population greater than 100,000.</p> <p>Source: MCEECDYA Geographic Location Classification System</p>
4. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training encourage schools to reflect on and respond to standard assessment results by quantifying and reporting on the qualitative measures used to support improvement in the achievement of their students.	Agreed	<p>The ACT Government introduced mandatory requirements through the <i>Education Act 2004</i> for schools to monitor, review and report school performance annually.</p> <p>ACT public schools report NAPLAN results and discuss measures to improve teaching quality and student achievements in their annual school board reports.</p>
5. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide Members of the Legislative Assembly copies of the response to the Report on the outcomes of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Elected Body Estimates Hearings 2008-09.	Agreed	<p>The ACT Government Response to the Elected Body Report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 19 August 2010.</p>

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
6. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training establish cross-cultural awareness training options for ACT teachers and negotiate with the Faculty of Education at the University of Canberra for the inclusion of pre-service courses in Indigenous studies.	Agreed	<p>The Directorate delivered a cultural awareness program to 214 school-based non-teaching staff in February 2011.</p> <p>In June 2011 the first in a series of modules was delivered to principals and deputy principals as part of an ongoing strategy to support leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and cultural competency training.</p>
7. The Committee recommends that further analysis be undertaken by the Department of Education and Training into the need for a specialist Indigenous language and creoles support program in the ACT education system.	Agreed in part	Whilst no Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages are currently within the eight languages supported by the Directorate, there is a project underway at Jervis Bay Primary School to investigate implementing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language program.
8. The Committee recommends that any programs or initiatives developed should be undertaken in consultation with ESL teachers and Indigenous educators and community leaders and that these programs should be funded independently of the existing ESL funding model.	Agreed	A project is underway investigating options to better address the literacy needs of refugee students in ACT public secondary schools. A working party has been established comprised of the Secondary ESL Executive Officer, ESL teachers from mainstream schools and the Secondary Introductory English Centre (SIEC).
9. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures that multiagency funding arrangements do not have a detrimental impact on services delivered to disadvantaged students and, where required outputs are being met and continued funding is anticipated, the disruption and uncertainty of contract changes are resolved by the government in a timely manner.	Agreed	A service agreement has been developed with Therapy ACT for the provision of services to students with a disability in ACT public schools.
10. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government investigate options for expanding the Gugan Gulwan program to include Years 11 and 12 students.	Noted	In 2010 the Directorate developed a funding proposal with Gugan Gulwan for the provision of intensive literacy teaching support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in years 6 to 9. Gugan Gulwan currently has limited physical resources to expand the program to other years.

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
11. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training undertake a full review and assessment of the English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) profile in the ACT education system including a breakdown of the groups of students within the broader category and a clear articulation of the sort of supports these students are likely to need.	Noted	<p>Current practice includes the identification of ESL students through eligibility criteria, ESL-moderated assessment tasks, and language performance ratings against an average English speaker for age and year level.</p> <p>For students with minimal English language proficiency, the Directorate offers placement in the Introductory English Centres.</p>
12. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training undertake a review of the funding model for EAL/D students with particular attention to the capacity of the model to meet the needs of the broader group of students identified by the profile review and whether targeted funds are able to meet all needs.	Noted	<p>An ESL Audit was undertaken in 2010, with the report forthcoming.</p> <p>A review of funding will be undertaken in response to the audit.</p>
13. The Committee recommends that any reviews of programs, services or funding models should be undertaken in consultation with students directly affected.	Noted	The Directorate regularly includes students and their parents in reviews and consultations where appropriate.
14. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government undertake to monitor and evaluate the early childhood schools success in preparing students, particularly those at risk of educational disadvantage, for learning and enhancing the capacity of families to support educational engagement.	Agreed	<p>The Early Childhood Schools Framework has been developed and finalised. Elements of data collection have commenced. Governance arrangements for the early childhood schools are under review.</p> <p>Early Childhood Intervention programs provide playgroups and programs to support children at risk through disability and/or delayed development. In addition, children who otherwise would not be able to attend preschool are supported to attend through the <i>Support at Preschool Program</i>.</p> <p>Five Koori preschool programs operate across Canberra, building cultural capacity, literacy and numeracy knowledge and skills, and providing transition support across the ACT for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from birth to five years of age.</p>

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
15. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government, bearing in mind the outcomes of the evaluation, commits to extending successful strategies of early childhood education into other areas of the school system as appropriate.	Agreed	Design work has commenced for Franklin Early Childhood School to continue the Early Childhood Schools Framework model. The school is due to open in 2013.
16. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work closely with the Catholic Education Office and the Association of Independent Schools to ensure that early learning and school transition advantages can be extended to all ACT students.	Agreed	<p>The Universal Access Governance Committee (UAGC) has a broad membership of key stakeholders in early childhood education including the Catholic Education Office and the Association of Independent Schools. The UAGC met three times in 2010 and focussed on a range of issues to support the delivery of the universal access to 15 hours of preschool education initiative and data development.</p> <p>Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) data was used to inform the rollout of universal access. In addition, the AEDI data has been used in schools to improve transitions and before school community supports.</p> <p>The Community Services Directorate, under whom the AEDI champions operate, have implemented a number of programs, including a data users workshop, community forums in Weston Creek, Richardson and Belconnen, and a planned community forum on children's physical health and wellbeing.</p>
17. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training facilitate forums on best practice in family engagement with student learning and provide resources to support teacher initiatives in this area of school activity.	Agreed	Low Socio-Economic Status National Partnership schools are continuing to work on parental engagement and are developing and trialling a variety of programs.

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
18. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training ensure that the diverse backgrounds and socio-economic circumstances of families are recognised as a factor influencing any family engagement strategies undertaken by schools and that schools are resourced to respond to the diverse needs of the school community.	Agreed in part	<p>In 2010-11, \$517,000 was distributed across all ACT public schools to support individual students from low socio-economic families.</p> <p>In 2010-11, \$221,000 was distributed to 15 schools that support the most disadvantaged communities. This funding is used for whole of school programs.</p>
19. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training, in consultation with the Centre for Research on Education, Poverty and Social Inclusion, develop strategic indicators to measure the performance of the education system in meeting identified equity challenges.	Agreed in part	<p>The Directorate and the University of Canberra established the Research Collaboration Group (RCG) which is co-chaired by the program leader of the Centre for Research on Education, Poverty and Social Inclusion.</p> <p>RCG is working on a research program which will explore the methodology for developing, compiling and reporting performance indicators for the Directorate in meeting equity challenges.</p>

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
<p>20. The Committee recommends that that ACT Government provide details to the Legislative Assembly of how the quality teaching strategy will address the specific needs of educationally disadvantaged students.</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	<p>The Quality Teaching model (QTm) was introduced to all schools in the second semester of 2008. The model describes an approach to pedagogy that applies from preschool to year 12, across all learning areas. It is based on contemporary research, in classroom and assessment practice, as to what makes the greatest difference to student learning outcomes and specifically addresses the issues of equity and the closing of achievement gaps. Research by the University of Newcastle conducted in 2004-07, showed that the QTm approach to pedagogy did result in significant improvement in achievement for all students, including students from disadvantaged situations.</p> <p>In 2010, a Quality Teaching resource kit containing background material, information, implementation ideas and other resources, was distributed to every school to enable them to continue their professional learning programs.</p> <p>Introductory workshops for teachers new to the ACT and professional learning support tailored to specific needs of schools were run at the Hedley Beare Centre for Teaching and Learning throughout the year.</p> <p>In 2011, professional development in the QTm has been a feature of the New Educators Support Program. Quality Teaching workshops have also been conducted to support teachers returning from leave and those in office-based positions. Curriculum Support Officers are continuing to provide support in the Quality Teaching model directly to individual teachers, teaching teams and schools.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the Directorate will provide an update to the Assembly in 2011-12.</p>

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
<p>21. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government commission an assessment of how well targeted programs for educationally disadvantaged or at risk students are meeting social inclusion objectives and priority 5.3 of the Canberra Social Plan and that the assessment be made publicly available.</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>The Directorate, through <i>the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2009-2013</i> continues to work to improve literacy and numeracy levels for all students.</p> <p>Literacy and Numeracy Coordinators and ESL teachers in all primary and high schools, work with class teachers to support students requiring additional support. In-class support, as well as intensive support for students with an Individual Learning Plan, is provided. Schools with under-achieving students receive additional allocations to meet their needs.</p>
<p>22. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government advocate through COAG for longitudinal studies to be conducted as a means of expanding the national research base for quality teaching strategies.</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	<p>The ACT Teacher Quality Institute (TQI) was established under the <i>ACT Teacher Quality Institute Act 2010</i> and commenced operation on 1 January 2011.</p> <p>The TQI is working closely with ACT teacher employers, education stakeholders and national bodies to implement professional teacher registration accredit teacher education courses and will lead the implementation of the National Professional Standards for Teachers including the certification of teachers at the highly accomplished and lead levels.</p>
<p>23. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that equity and need are given priority in Commonwealth – State/ Territory funding negotiations.</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	<p>The National Education Agreement has been established to pursue this agenda. The Commonwealth and ACT Governments have agreed to reform directions which address the provision of support to students with additional needs, reducing the educational disadvantage of children and integrated educational strategies for low socio-economic school communities. This agreement will also drive reform directions to ‘Close the Gap’ in educational outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, a key outcome as part of the National Indigenous Reform Agreement - which the ACT will pursue through the broadest possible spectrum of government action.</p>

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
24. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training provide a comprehensive assessment of current methods and outcomes for meeting identified need in the education system and develop a coherent strategy in which all programs can be reviewed against the objective of improving the educational engagement and achievement of disadvantaged students and enhancing equity within the system.	Noted	The Directorate's strategic plan incorporates strong links to the current School Improvement Framework and national partnerships commitments to allow schools to incorporate the priorities and performance measures into existing planning structures. Under the broad theme of 'everyone matters' the plan notes the importance of better support and engagement with students, teachers and support staff, leaders and parents and the community.

Report 4: Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2008-2009

Presented 6 May 2010

The ACT Government response to the *Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2008-2009* was provided to the Assembly on 24 August 2010. The Directorate responded to seven of the 12 recommendations.

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
1. The Committee recommends that the impact of reducing average class size on student learning outcomes be reported on in future Department of Education and Training annual reports.	Agreed	The Directorate monitors average class size annually. Progress on reducing average class size and the impact on student outcomes is reported in Section A9 of this annual report.
2. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training investigate how parents without mobile telephones may achieve the same level of prompt awareness of student absences as those parents with mobile telephones.	Agreed	Schools are able to advise parents by phone and/or email if a student is absent following notification of an absence. These additional notification methods are supplementary to traditional methods of notifying parents of school absences which include direct phone calls and written notification. The Directorate will continue to examine emerging alternative methods of notifying parents without mobile phones to ensure all parents receive notification of student absences as promptly as possible.

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
3. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training provide data on the effectiveness of the SMS Notify System on student absenteeism rates in the next annual report.	Agreed	Section A9 of this annual report provides discussion of student absenteeism and SMS Notify System.
4. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training identify and implement best practice options for recycling used ICT equipment.	Agreed	The Directorate uses the whole of government disposal procedures which comply with international standards of environmental management, set by the International Organization for Standardization. ACT Government uses the services of the disposal broker – Capital Easy - to manage the recycling and disposal of ICT hardware. Additionally, Shared Services: ICT supports the Chief Minister's Computer Re-use scheme. This scheme allows for up to a maximum of 100 end of life computers to be made available for not-for-profit purposes each year. This was used by the Directorate during the implementation of the National Secondary Schools Computer Fund.
5. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government implement a whole-of-government e-waste strategy with an aim of minimising the environmental impact of ACT Government ICT equipment.	Agreed	Shared Services: ICT manages the disposal of IT assets on behalf of the Directorate. Shared Services: ICT has already implemented an ICT asset disposal process which meets the international standard for environment management systems. Capital Easy is the Shared Services: ICT broker for undertaking the disposal of these ICT assets. Capital Easy has a comprehensive approach to managing e-waste and minimising the environmental impact of ICT equipment.

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
<p>6. The Committee recommends that, upon completion of industry consultation, the Minister report to the ACT Legislative Assembly on the ACT Government's proposal to address the weaknesses outlined in the review of the secondary college system.</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>The 2007 – 2009 College Business Plan was not renewed in 2010. In 2010 the ACT Minister for Education and Training released a discussion paper, <i>Improving ACT Public High Schools and Colleges</i>, inviting the community to contribute ideas to improve and energise the ACT public secondary education system. That consultation process culminated in the launch of <i>Excellence and Enterprise: Advancing public schools of distinction</i> in May 2011. The Directorate is now planning the implementation of the key directions contained within the Excellence and Enterprise framework.</p>
<p>7. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government quantifies the economic benefits to the ACT community of international students and monitor this benefit carefully against changes in the national higher education sector.</p>	<p>Agreed in principle</p>	<p>In May 2010, the ACT Education Services Export Strategy report advised that almost 10,000 international students make a financial contribution to the ACT each year of around \$260 million, and make valuable social and cultural contributions to the ACT community.</p> <p>Figures obtained by the Directorate from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations indicate that at March 2011, 8,949 international students were enrolled in a range of programs in the ACT, including higher education, vocational education and training, English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) and other, non-award courses.</p> <p>Of these, 3,054 are new commencements which, when compared with all new commencements in 2010 of 3,122, indicate that the ACT has not experienced any significant falling away in international student enrolments.</p>

Report 5: Needs of ACT Students with a Disability

Presented 21 October 2010

The ACT Government response to the *Inquiry into Needs of ACT Students with a Disability* was provided to the Legislative Assembly on 15 February 2011. The Directorate responded to 30 recommendations.

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
1. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training support the capacity for cross-sector dialogue and information and skills sharing on best practice in the delivery of disability education services between government and non-government education systems.	Agreed	This recommendation has been incorporated into the <i>Excellence in Disability Education Strategic Plan 2010-2013</i> . The timeline for completion is 2011-2012.
2. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training liaise with the non-government education sector to ensure consistency in the descriptors of educational services.	Agreed	The Cross-Sectoral Disability Education Steering Group has been formed and meets regularly. It is comprised of representatives from the public, independent and Catholic school systems.
3. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training confer with the providers and users of educational services to ACT students with disabilities regarding any proposed changes to service names.	Agreed	Common descriptors of education services are addressed as an activity of the cross-sectoral Disability Education Steering Group.
4. The Committee recommends that Individual Learning Plans should be developed as a formal benchmarking tool which will assist in the refinement of teaching strategies at the classroom level and be able to measure the level of success of schools in the delivery of educational services to students with disabilities.	Agreed	Changes to service descriptions are tabled at the meeting of the Disability Education Reference Group. Work has begun on the Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Priority 3: the development of a parent guide to disability education that describes services, processes and policies. This guide will incorporate a clear description to providers and users the names and functions of all disability education services. The parent/carer sub-committee of the Disability Education Reference Group is providing advice on the content of this guide.

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
5. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training investigate, develop and implement a system of objective educational measures of outcomes for students with a disability that would allow teaching strategies to be refined and system level planning to be undertaken.	Agreed	The Directorate is engaged in the ACARA working group formed to investigate and provide input into the Australian Curriculum to ensure it reflects education outcomes for all students including students with disabilities. This working group meets on a regular basis. It is envisaged that the outcome will be a system of nationally consistent standards of student learning outcomes applicable to students with disabilities that will allow teaching strategies to be refined and system level planning to be undertaken.
6. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training investigate and implement a process by which general assessment outcomes for students with disability can be disaggregated in the results from key assessment programs such as the National Assessment Program (NAPLAN).	Agreed	NAPLAN results for students with disabilities are already disaggregated and used to monitor student progress where possible. Where standard assessment programs are not considered valid assessment instruments for students with a disability, it is anticipated that aggregation of achievement of individual learning plan goals will be used to monitor outcomes for students.
7. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government examines the proposal set out in the Review of Special Education in the ACT to adopt a broader definition of disability that is consistent with discrimination law and that the Minister for Education and Training report back to the Legislative Assembly.	Agreed	The Directorate will be represented in an across Australia trial of a national definition of disability consistent with the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> . The trial is anticipated to commence between July and August 2011. The results of this trial will be put before the Australian Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Senior Officials and the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) for endorsement. A report will be provided to the Assembly after endorsement from the SCSEEC.

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
8. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review the <i>ACT Discrimination Act 1991</i> to ensure consistency with the provisions set out in the <i>Commonwealth Discrimination Act 1992</i> .	Agreed	The ACT Government made a commitment in the Canberra Plan to review the <i>ACT Discrimination Act 1991</i> . In addition, the Human Rights Commission recently provided advice on the specific issue of reasonable accommodation. While it is not certain in advance of the results of the review that it is necessary to amend the current Act to ensure consistency with the <i>Commonwealth Discrimination Act 1992</i> , the Attorney General will ask that consistency with the <i>Commonwealth Discrimination Act 1992</i> be taken into account in the proposed review.
9. The Committee recommends that the Minister for Education and Training provide an explanation to the Legislative Assembly as to why the estimated average cost of providing education services to students with disabilities in mainstream public schools has not been subject to the same cost pressures as other service delivery costs and why the percentage growth in this cost between 1999 and 2008 is nearly half that of other percentage estimate average cost growth.	Noted	The total cost derived for this output class did not appropriately attribute the enrolment growth and the complexity of need of students with a disability. Some weighting of these cost pressures was attributed to output class 1.1 to 1.3. In 2009-10 financial statements, the enrolment growth and complexity in need (output class 1.4) is appropriately attributed to reflect the true cost of special education in both the mainstream and specialist schools. The cost of special education is reported through the Directorate's annual report process.
10. The Committee recommends that a schematic representation of the definition and funding model used to allocate general school and specialist education funds in the ACT be provided to all parents and carers as a part of the documentation relating to resources available for students with a disability.	Agreed	Work has begun on the Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Priority 3: the development of a parent guide to disability education that describes services, processes and policies. This guide will incorporate a clear description of the funding model used to allocate resources to schools for students with a disability and functions of all disability education services. The parent/carer sub-committee of the Disability Education Reference Group is providing advice on the content of this guide.

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
<p>11. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training undertake a full review of the average cost associated with the delivery of education services to students with disability which provides better indications of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs of developing individual learning plans for all students who are identified as having a disability • Costs of assessing “reasonable adjustments” in the delivery of education services • Costs of training and resourcing teachers to implement “reasonable adjustments” in the delivery of the current curriculum • Costs of maintaining Learning Support Units within mainstream schools. 	Agreed in part	<p>A tender process has been completed to contract the service of a consultant to provide a number of proposed models of targeted funding for students with disabilities in ACT public schools. The models will integrate the student centred appraisal of need and individual learning plan processes in order to align allocation of resources better with actual adjustments made in classrooms. The cost of each Learning Support Unit in mainstream schools is already known. However, there is frequently a significant adjustment in funding above the base funding to Learning Support Units dependent on the nature and mix of the students attending the unit that would make a simple average in this case invalid.</p>
<p>12. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training undertake exit interviews with students with disability and their parents or carers who move from mainstream to special schools to identify common concerns or reasons for student movements.</p>	Agreed	<p>The Directorate is developing a process, involving students with a disability and their parents or carers, to identify common concerns and/or reasons for students exiting a program, or moving from one program to another.</p>
<p>13. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training provide details in the Annual Report of the delivery of special needs transport services including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers of students accessing service • Numbers of trips per annum • Details of average and longest trips • Adverse events on transport services. 	Agreed in part	<p>Details on the number of students accessing the service and any formal complaints are provided in Section A9 of this annual report.</p>

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
14. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training provide information at enrolment about all available funding programs which may assist students with disabilities.	Agreed	Work has begun on the Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Priority 3: the development of a parent guide to disability education that describes services, processes and policies. The parent/carer sub-committee of the Disability Education Reference Group is providing advice on the content of this guide. The guide will include information about available funding programs that may assist students with a disability. The guide will be accessible to families prior to student enrolment.
15. The Committee recommends that as a part of the review of School-Based Management funding arrangements the ACT Government ensure that the quantity of, and processes established for allocating, funding for students with disabilities within government schools be clearly articulated and monitored by the Department of Education and Training.	Noted	The Directorate will report ongoing investment in disability education through the budget process.
16. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training consider ways to improve the understanding of disability education services as a key indicator of administrative flexibility and responsiveness.	Agreed in part	<i>Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools: Strategic Plan 2010–2013</i> sets the strategic direction for disability education. The Directorate will report against the actions detailed in the plan. Flexibility, responsiveness and understanding of disability education services will be outcomes of the plan. However it is not agreed that an understanding of disability education services is a key indicator of flexibility or responsiveness.

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
17. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government assess the best means of coordinating information sources for students with disabilities and their advocates.	Agreed	The Directorate is working collaboratively across government to implement the ACT Government Policy Framework for Children and Young People with a Disability and their Families. The Directorate has developed a Service Agreement with Therapy ACT for the provision of therapy services to schools and has as a priority to develop a Service Agreement with ACT Health. The Directorate continues to liaise closely with the Catholic and independent school sectors through the cross-sectoral Disability Education Steering Group.
18. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training review the timing of the Student Centred Appraisal of Need (SCAN) review process and establish a mechanism to ensure that the funding approach to allocate resources to students with specified disabilities will be focused towards maximising learning outcomes as proposed by the 2009 Review of Special Education in the ACT.	Agreed	A tender process has been completed to contract the service of a consultant to provide a number of proposed models of targeted funding for students with disabilities in ACT public schools. The models will integrate the student centred appraisal of need and individual learning plan processes in order to align allocation of resources better with actual adjustments made in classrooms.
19. The Committee recommends that the students' needs for inclusive technology be assessed as a part of the Student Centred Appraisal of Need (SCAN) process.	Agreed	The Directorate's Individual Learning Plan guidelines are being reviewed and will identify appropriate inclusive technologies in addition to other curriculum adaptations, modified teaching strategies and designated resources as important tools to support the achievement of student learning outcomes. The <i>Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools: Strategic Plan 2010–2013</i> priority of developing an Inclusion Support Centre will embed Inclusive Technologies in the core business of all disability education consultant teachers.

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
20. The Committee recommends that Department of Education and Training Network Coordinators be required to report on the audit of Individual Learning Plans from schools in their areas and that outcomes of the audit process be detailed in the Annual Report.	Noted	<i>Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools: Strategic Plan 2010–2013</i> Strategic Priority 2 outlines as a key action that accountability measures be put in place for ILPs by instituting an audit of ILP quality and implementation. The outcome of this audit will be shared with School Network Leaders and reported. The Directorate will continue to survey parents and carers about their satisfaction with the individual learning plan process.
21. The Committee recommends that the Minister for Education and Training review the use of consultants in government schools in light of the comments made in the 2009 Review of Special Education Services particularly in assessing the need for disability education consultants.	Agreed	<i>Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools: Strategic Plan 2010–2013</i> Strategic Priority 1 has as a key action to reconfigure services for students with a disability in an Inclusion Support Centre. The Disability Education Executive Team is currently developing the concept of this centre. Consultant teachers will focus on building the capacity of teachers to support students with a disability in mainstream schools through the use of evidence-based teaching strategies and curriculum differentiation to support students' individual learning plans.
22. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training consider the need for a pilot program within the ACT education system for alternative class-room based disability teaching models.	Noted	The Directorate provides a range of educational options for students with disabilities including specialist schools, learning support units and centres, specific learning support units for students with autism and mainstream education with additional support. The initial round of funding to schools to develop innovative practices for students with additional support needs has been allocated and schools will report on the outcomes of these programs. A second round of grants will be offered later in 2011.

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
<p>23. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training review the role of Learning Support Assistants with the structure of the disability education sector with a view to formalising the role; assessing the appropriate staffing ratios; providing initial training and professional development opportunities; and clarifying duties within the classroom in terms of maximising the learning outcomes for students with disabilities.</p>	<p>Agreed in part</p>	<p><i>Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools: Strategic Plan 2010–2013</i> Strategic Priority 1 outlines as a key action the clarification of the role of learning support assistants (LSAs). This will include developing a system-wide set of guidelines on appropriate roles for LSAs. LSAs are able to access formal qualifications in Education Support – Certificates III and IV, through the qualified Registered Training Organisations such as the Canberra Institute of Technology. Additional professional learning for LSAs is also offered regularly throughout each year by the Directorate. Schools have been encouraged to explore the use of LSAs in the classroom through the allocation of Innovative Practices grants. Schools will report on the outcomes of these grants.</p>

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
<p>24. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training, in reviewing the role of Learning Support Assistants, review the need for additional Indigenous Education Officers and Indigenous Learning Support Assistants to support the learning of Indigenous students with disabilities.</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>The Directorate has an employment strategy with a fundamental outcome to increase the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people including teachers and LSAs. Actions to achieve these are described and reported in the <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Matters: Strategic Plan 2010–2013</i>. <i>Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools: Strategic Plan 2010–2013</i> Strategic Priority 1 outlines actions to develop the quality of LSA provision, including improved skills and cultural competence through increased investment in professional learning.</p> <p>The philosophy of the Indigenous Education Officer role has been to develop the skills and attitudes of all employees to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and not to target Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers to work only with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Any consideration regarding a change to this approach would be made only after significant consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Group.</p>
<p>25. The Committee recommends that the Minister for Education and Training provide a statement to the Legislative Assembly on the outcomes of the service agreement between the Department of Education and Training and Therapy ACT and the effectiveness of this agreement in redressing the gap in services identified in the Review of Special Education in the ACT.</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>The Directorate has developed a Service Agreement with Therapy ACT for the provision of therapy services in schools. The Directorate will report annually against the performance measures identified in the plan to the Director-General and the Disability Education Reference Group. This report will be published on the Directorate website. Outcomes of the Service Agreement will also be reported through the Directorate's annual report process.</p>

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
<p>26. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government monitor the progress of the post-school options support provider (currently the House with no Steps) in providing planning supports to students with disabilities from at least year 9 and, if necessary, provide additional resources to facilitate early planning of post-school pathways for all students with disabilities.</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	<p>Disability ACT will continue to monitor the progress of the service provider through the provisions of the funding agreement. A joint governance group consisting of senior staff from the Directorate and the Community Services Directorate guides service development, including the implementation of planning practices, beginning as early as year 7. Disability ACT will continue to monitor the capacity of funded providers to deliver appropriate services to school leavers and re-assess resource allocation where appropriate.</p>

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
<p>27. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that the formula used to determine the allocation of funding for post-school options is based on the number of students graduating each year so that adequate services can be provided.</p>	<p>Not agreed</p>	<p>The funding provided to each student graduating from high school is based on the needs of the individual and not on a 'formula' based on the number of students graduating in that particular year.</p> <p>The ACT Government provides support to assist young people with a disability who are leaving school and who cannot presently participate in full-time employment or full-time education, or may not be able to do so in the future.</p> <p>To do this, Disability ACT offers two forms of specialist support for young people with disability leaving school.</p> <p>Transitional support The House With No Steps Transition Service provides school leavers who require time limited additional assistance to progress to their preferred vocation with information and assistance with planning and coordination. The Transition Service works with students in the final years of school (generally years 11 and 12) and support continues for up to three years after the person leaves school.</p> <p>Ongoing support This is provided to people with high support needs who require funded supports to undertake meaningful day time activities after they leave school.</p> <p>Access to these services is based on an individual assessment of a person's support needs that are determined by interviews with the young person, their family, and their school teachers.</p>

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
28. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training include questions about access and effectiveness of post-school planning on the annual parent satisfaction survey.	Agreed	The Directorate will include questions about post-school options planning in the annual parent satisfaction survey. The review of the Individual Learning Plan guidelines will include the requirement that all ILPs will include a transition goal. The survey of effectiveness of ILPs contained within the parent satisfaction survey will be adapted to include an element that specifically addresses transition planning including post school transition.
29. The Department of Education and Training provide details of the external linkages established, including type of organisations, and the numbers of students attending the post-school options expo in the Annual Report.	Noted	<p><i>Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools: Strategic Plan 2010–2013</i> Strategic Priority 4 outlines actions for whole of government collaboration. The Students with Disability Post School Transition Joint Advisory Group co-chaired by senior officers of Disability ACT and the Directorate consists of members of those directorates, service providers, students, and parents. The group oversees the totality of services to support post school transitions. This group has as a major priority the enhancement of community support pathways.</p> <p>The group will develop an information guide for parents on available pathways and will capture data about the relative use of these services, including attendance at the post-school options expo and its efficacy. The post-school options expo is one activity of a significant array of activities aimed at improving post-school transitions for students and their families. Incorporating the reporting of outcomes from the post-school options expo into a broader report from the group will provide a more complete picture of government and community links in supporting transitions to post-school life.</p>

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
30. The Department of Education and Training assess the impact of the changed vocational education structure on the pathways available to students with disabilities.	Agreed	<p>The Directorate has contracted the House with No Steps to provide work experience and social placement opportunities for all students with a disability in ACT public schools in years 9 and 10. This will assist students in identifying appropriate pathways to post-school life.</p> <p>Students with a disability in the college system can access vocational courses on the same basis as students without a disability. The school is required to make reasonable adjustments to support these students. The two specialist secondary schools, Black Mountain School and Woden School also offer vocational options for their students.</p> <p>Planning for post-school options occurs through the Individual Learning Plan process and will often include integration of some aspects of further training. Prior to leaving school, students are connected with a range of service providers that can assist students to make a positive transition to post-school life. Senior managers from the Tertiary and International Education branch of the Directorate are key members of the Students with Disability Post School Transition Joint Advisory Group and assist this group in assessing the impact of changes in the vocational education structure on pathways for students with disabilities.</p>

Select Committee on Estimates 2010-2011

Appropriation Bill 2010-2011

Presented 22 June 2010

The Select Committee on Estimates *Inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2010-2011* provided a report with 47 recommendations on a wide range of issues. The Government response, which was tabled on 29 June 2010, agreed to 19 recommendations, agreed in principle to four recommendations, agreed in part to one recommendation, noted 17 recommendations and did not agree to six recommendations. Details of the three recommendations and their implementation for which the Directorate has responsibility, are provided below.

Details of the Government's response to the recommendations for which other agencies have responsibility would appear in those agencies' annual reports.

Recommendation	Response	Implementation
27. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training develop accountability indicators which can measure the views of the principle (sic) users of public education services- students and parents/carers.	Agreed in principle	The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority is currently in the process of developing nationally consistent measures of satisfaction with schooling. Once developed, the Directorate will consider adopting nationally consistent satisfaction measures as accountability indicators. In the meantime, satisfaction levels with public education will remain strategic indicators.
28. The Committee recommends that future budget papers include accountability measures and outcome targets for the Productivity Places Program.	Agreed	Two accountability measures for the Productivity Places Program have been included in the 2011-12 budget papers.
29. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training and Corrections ACT partner to ensure the provision of adult education and vocational training packages which best establish opportunities for the restoration of detainees of the Alexander Maconochie Centre back into the community.	Agreed	The Directorate has commenced discussions with officers from the Justice and Community Safety Directorate and the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) who manage training to explore options for ongoing training models post the expiration of the current contract. This will include exploration of programs, and funding options, to maximise smooth transition from AMC programs to those offered in the community.

Select Committee on Estimates 2011-2012

Appropriation Bill 2011-2012

Presented 21 June 2011

The Select Committee *Inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2011-2012* provided a report with 194 recommendations on a wide range of issues.

The Directorate has responsibility for seven of the committee's recommendations. The short time between the tabling of the Government response on 28 June 2011 and the end of the reporting period did not allow for progress to be made against the recommendations.

Recommendation	Response
114. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government advise whether existing Federal funding covers the full cost of NSW students who are educated in the ACT, and what negotiations with NSW have occurred.	Agreed
115. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide details of all initiatives to be included in the ACT Secondary Schools Innovation Fund and how it will determine priorities for funding the various elements.	Noted
116. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government advise the Legislative Assembly, of the timetable for the 'blueprint for action' in their response to the report.	Noted
117. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider including teacher subject area specialities on the teachers register established under the <i>Teacher Quality Institute Act 2010</i> .	Noted
118. The Committee recommends that, to respond to the shortage of qualified maths and science teachers within the ACT public education system, the ACT Government bring forward the introduction of the Teach Next initiative so that public school maths and science students are not disadvantaged by teacher shortages.	Noted
119. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide further details of how the \$11.8 million allocation for "educational reform and provision of enhanced career paths for teachers" is to be allocated.	Agreed
120. The Committee recommends that the Education and Training Directorate partner with Tourism, Sport and Recreation to ensure better provision of continuing sports programs in schools for students with disabilities.	Agreed
121. The Committee recommends that, when the Bradley review is completed, it be tabled in the Legislative Assembly on the next available sitting day.	Noted

For more information contact:
 Director
 Information, Communications and Governance
 (02) 6205 7661

B4 Legislative report

The Directorate is identified against seven pieces of legislation in the Administrative Arrangements:

- *ACT Teacher Quality Institute Act 2010* which was notified on 20 December 2010 and commenced on 1 January 2011
- *Board of Senior Secondary Studies Act 1997*
- *Building and Construction Industry Training Levy Act 1999*
- *Canberra Institute of Technology Act 1987*
- *Education Act 2004*
- *Training and Tertiary Education Act 2003*
- *University of Canberra Act 1989*.

The Canberra Institute of Technology, the University of Canberra, and the Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority are not part of the administrative unit of the Directorate. Therefore, the Director-General has no direct responsibility or powers delegated by the Minister for Education and Training in respect of the *Canberra Institute of Technology Act 1987*, the *University of Canberra Act 1989* and the *Building and Construction Industry Training Levy Act 1999*.

Amendments to the legislation notified during the reporting period are as follows:

- *Education Act 2004* amended by *Education Amendment Act 2010 (No 2)*, notified 6 July 2010.

For more information contact:

Director

Information, Communications and Governance

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