

1.

Portfolio/s: Education & Early Childhood Development**ISSUE: FUTURE OF EDUCATION****Talking points:**

- A big conversation has been held with over 5000 community members and the product of this conversation is the Future of Education Strategy.
- The strategy lays out a roadmap for work over the coming ten years.
- It is aimed at the whole system and all schools, government and non-government, systemic and independent.
- Government, alongside it, will be developing an Early Childhood Strategy which will make sure every child is set up for success.
- The Future of Education Strategy articulates values that have been reflected throughout the conversation.
- Every parent wants the very best for their child, both during childhood and into their future lives. But even in wealthy communities like the ACT children start life in vastly different places, with different backgrounds and circumstances affecting their chances at a good life.

Key informationFour foundations:

Four foundations for the strategy provide for a long term vision of educational improvement that is evidence based and underpinned by concrete and targeted actions.

1. Students at the centre: including a culture of high expectations, family engagement, curriculum based on a necessary life skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity and values such as well-being, resilience, empathy and citizenship. Community input has particularly outlined the importance of wellbeing, positive relationships and a sense of belonging for our young people across all educational environments.

- The ACT Government is committed to ensuring our public schools are environments that welcome and accept *all* children and young people, having invested significantly in school upgrades (Environmentally Sustainable Schools); creating schools for our growing city, particularly in Gungahlin; as well as a new P – 6 school in Molonglo.
- Furthermore, the ACT Government understands that wellbeing underpins learning, having provided an additional 20 new psychologists for public schools. The first five additional school psychologists will be recruited for the 2018 school year and were funded in the 2017/18 budget. An additional five psychologists will be employed each year for the next three years.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 04/09/2018

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- The ACT Government will continue to implement effective, rigorous inquiry and project-based learning models, with an increasing focus on development of the general capabilities in the current curriculum.
- We will continue to work on measurement and evaluation of student learning growth. We will aim for each student to achieve a minimum of a year's growth for a year's learning, having regard to their starting point.

2. Empowered learning professionals: including collaboration across and within the system, recruitment and retention and support strategies.

Community input speaks to the importance of quality teaching and teachers and of providing system support to enable teachers to meet the needs of all students, particularly disadvantaged young people.

- The ACT Government understands it is vital that the right people enter the teaching profession. Equally, significant investment in professional learning and mentoring and coaching, and the sharing of effective practice will continue and expand.
- The implementation of the election commitment to ensure new teachers have the mentoring they need to success in their careers is an important tangible action under this strategy. The Directorate will develop and deliver a comprehensive mentoring program in partnership with a leading University provided, in order to enhance the impact of those school leaders tasked with mentoring beginning teachers in their first three years.
- A further partnership with the University of Canberra is resulting in the pilot and implementation of a strengthened Affiliate Schools model will focus on intensive teacher development through MTeach program and ongoing Action Research. It is anticipated that as this program gains traction it will be an incentive for excellent teachers to apply for roles in both Belconnen and Tuggeranong networks.
- Our election commitment to Great Teaching will provides enhances the ability of our school leaders to deliver school improvement and ensure a focus on quality teaching in every classroom.
- The Directorate is taking a more structured approach to strengthening instructional leadership and making sure the right people progress into school leadership roles, at the same time ensuring wellbeing support for school leaders.
- The government will also bring a new focus on making sure that teachers and school leaders have the knowledge, skills and confidence to work as part of a team in a full service community school.
- Finally, there is an opportunity for an expanded role for the ACT Teacher Quality Institute (as a clearing house for excellent practice).

3. Strong communities for learning: - building stronger bonds with and across all sectors to effectively collaborate and provide holistic supports for learners.

This foundation reflects strong feedback from the ACT community regarding 'Schools as a Hub' projects, integrating multi-agency outreach services on site.

- The ACT Government has begun to explore effective community school models. Arising as an initiative from the strategy, the government will look to bring community school approaches to the ACT education system.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 04/09/2018

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- Additionally, the government recognises the effective business, industry and union partnerships that help students to access important learning opportunities and develop capabilities that they will need for adult life.
- This will be a continuing priority through initiatives such as the Future Skills Academies announced in the 2018 budget. The Academies, to be provided at University of Canberra's Senior Secondary College at Lake Ginninderra, as well as Caroline Chisholm School, will encourage girls to take a greater interest in science, engineering and technical subjects. The hubs provide a portal for engaging with industry professionals and organisations and encourage all students to undertake STEM subjects.
- The strategy is clear in its reference to parents and families as a child's first teacher. In 2016, ACT Govt committed to employ a dedicated parent engagement officer within the Education Directorate who worked with schools and parent groups to promote parental engagement across the ACT.
- The Govt also committed \$1.6 million over four years to fund grants to schools and parent groups for activities and programs designed to enhance parental engagement at schools and support strong parent communities.
- The Directorate will employ a dedicated parental engagement officer and deliver a grants program to enhance parental engagement in children's learning and support strong family-school partnerships. This program will commence at the start of the 2018-19 financial year.

4. Systems supporting learning: - a systemic focus on equity and quality; including ensuring schools are networked, offer smooth transitions within and across schools, have good access to data and evaluation and good welfare supports.

Community input outlined the importance of the focus on equity (as integral to quality) and of offering a range of pathways and flexible delivery options for students, and of having coherent centralised supports for schools.

- Things like legislation, resources, structures, culture, public accountability and reporting, teaching tools, data and IT, are all 'systems' that support learning. With the government's increasing focus on equity and allowing every child the opportunity to achieve excellent outcomes, regardless of their background and circumstance, comes a need to align the systems supporting learning with this pursuit.
- The ACT Government is strengthening learning and belonging for *all* children and young people through the full implementation of a student need based funding model, responding to 'Gonski' needs based funding principles.
- Further initiatives arising from the strategy include work towards the government's Early Childhood Strategy, which will emphasise helping each child gain a strong start through quality and accessible early childhood education.
- The government will also look at key statutory frameworks such as the Education Act 2004 and the ACT Teacher Quality Institute Act 2010 to make sure that they are harmonious with the strategic direction that the government is laying out.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS: See separate attachment.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 04/09/2018

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Question	Key Points	Answer
What difference will this strategy make?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategy outlines the vision for education in the ACT for the next decade. Realising the vision of the strategy will be a journey, which will be taken in phases, over the next ten years. • More specifically, the implementation of actions under the strategy will be implemented in three phases. • Initial actions have been developed for the strategy under each of the four foundations, however, as implementation progresses additional more detailed actions will be developed for Phases 2 and 3. • Change will be staged, with some initiatives requiring extensive planning and pilot programs in individual schools to assess impact, prior to wider implementation.
Why do you say 'equity' when we should be focussing on 'quality'?	<p><i>Raised Elizabeth Lee 16 August 2018</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ACT Govt understands high performing systems focus on quality. They develop rigorous curriculum, understand their impact, make resource allocation more effective and efficient, empower school leaders, attend to teacher quality, and they prioritise improvement – all for the benefit of the children and young people in their care. • The ACT Govt believes we must make explicit our focus on equity. Systems that prioritise ensuring all students can succeed, regardless of their family background or circumstances, have more students gaining the skills and knowledge they need to make the most of what the world has on offer. • From early childhood, through to junior and senior school, a focus on equity provides a strong basis for

		<p>education systems to make a difference for students.</p>
<p>What role will NAPLAN play in measuring one year's learning for a year's attendance?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAPLAN is only one piece of the puzzle when it comes to tracking our students' ability in literacy and numeracy. Schools use lots of methods to assess and support students. We do this to make sure that we track and record meaningful data for all children. • With this in mind, we are shifting our focus from achievement to progress. We want to see that we are making progress year on year. Because we come from a high base, we are more interested in the progress we are making as we are already maintaining high levels of achievement.
<p>What is meant by 'transitions processes and learning pathways' within the strategy?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community told us we need to look at how students can transition smoothly across stages of schooling (into early childhood, then to primary school, high school, and from college to work, training or university). • All of the feedback groups (schools, young people, community, parents and individuals) stated that there could be more focus on, and support for, transitions. • Feedback also noted that transitions can be more difficult for students who are developmentally vulnerable, experiencing disadvantage or who are already struggling to engage with school. • Many contributors note the role that community agencies can play in providing that continuity • The ultimate realisation of the strategy will be that students

		<p>experience one learning pathway, that takes place across multiple sites, with that pathway adjusted to respond to student interests and needs. Transitions, as the community have described their current experience of crossing from one learning environment to another, would be more successfully integrated into the student’s learning pathway.</p>
<p>How will the work of the Teacher Quality Institute change under this strategy?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ACT Teacher Quality Institute has been a national leader in building and supporting an expert teaching profession. • The Institute has played an important role in identifying excellent practice, resulting in teachers who are certified against rigorous National standards working in ACT schools. • The government will strengthen the TQI’s cross-sectoral role in sharing excellent practice and contemporary research evidence even further by exploring the concept of teaching clearinghouse that captures and shares excellent practice across all jurisdictions.
<p>What is the role of parent engagement under this strategy?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategy is clear in its reference to parents and families as a child’s first teacher. • In 2016, ACT Govt committed to employ a dedicated parent engagement officer within the Education Directorate who worked with schools and parent groups to promote parental engagement across the ACT. • The Govt also committed \$1.6 million over four years to fund grants to schools and parent groups for activities and programs designed to enhance parental engagement at

		<p>schools and support strong parent communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Directorate will employ a dedicated parental engagement officer and deliver a grants program to enhance parental engagement in children’s learning and support strong family-school partnerships. This program will commence at the start of the 2018-19 financial year.
<p>What is the role of parent choice under this strategy?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ACT Government is committed to offering a high quality education to each student. • Priority enrolment areas are how the Director General ensures that the obligation in the <i>Education Act 2004</i> to give ‘priority to the enrolment of children in the government school in their neighbourhood’ is met. • Students who reside in that area have priority for enrolment at that school. • Schools must maintain available capacity to accommodate current and future students from within their priority enrolment area before they accept out-of-area students
<p>What is the role of home education? Will home education be reviewed under this strategy?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Directorate provides school education services to children and young people both directly through public schools and indirectly through regulation of non-government schools and home education. • Its vision under the Future of Education strategy is that all young people in the ACT learn, thrive and are equipped with the skills to lead fulfilling, productive and responsible lives. • The Future of Education strategy will ensure that young people engaged in home schooling will be doing so in line with the principles within the strategy and that the home education program was resulting in individual and social

		wellbeing as well as clearly evidenced learning growth.
Did the non-Government sector have input into the strategy?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The non-Government sector have been valued partners in this conversation with membership on the Partnership Table, that met three times during the strategy's development. • Colleagues from the Non-Govt sector also participated in the more targeted second round of consultation in March 2018 called "Immersion"
What impact will the community see in the short term?	The community will see...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the short term, school communities will see more opportunity to contribute to a conversation about the learning in their school and how community services in schools can provide support to students and families. • School communities will see schools exploring how resources can be used better to support disadvantaged families; and the provision of a range of coordinated supports for children and young people and their families. • They will see school staff valuing collaboration and strengthening partnerships, with community services and parents to provision of a range of coordinated supports for children and young people • They will also begin to see students provided with more support through transitions.
What is my child going to see?	Students will see...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will notice they have an increased say in their learning and learning environments. • Wellbeing will be a focus, where students are known and welcomed during transitions.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will develop the knowledge and skills to operate in the changing world; and they can pursue their learning passions through connected and personalised learning, which will take into account their learning needs.
Is this strategy just about what the community wants?	Thorough research and analysis behind the scenes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The feedback has been guided by the community's input, however the actions in the strategy are firmly grounded in research. • The Project Team undertook a significant review of literature prior to developing the strategy and actions. • A summary of relevant research considered has been published alongside the strategy.
Isn't it the job of government to make policy, rather than the community?	Really positive feedback through entire process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the consultation we heard from over 5.000 individuals. There were many voices heard during this processes through many different channels and we looked at everything you told us. • Many themes emerged through the feedback and you will see the stronger themes reflected in the strategy. While not every piece of feedback will be seen directly through the strategy, some specific feedback was passed on to schools or teams responsible for that area of work.
What's the impact upon our already overburdened teachers and school leaders of this new strategy?	Teachers and school leaders will see...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers and school leaders will see a shift from administrative based tasks, towards more time being given to develop quality teaching. • They will have the opportunity to push the traditional confines of schooling to explore where, when and how learning can occur, what is learnt and who provides the learning experience. • There will also opportunities to learn about different approaches to

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		<p>personalised learning support for every child</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be an increased focus professional development and improved training, practicum, recruitment and induction processes for teachers.
Is there bi-partisan support for this strategy?	More than happy to work with the Opposition to realise the goals of the strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategy has been developed using feedback from the whole ACT community and as a result reflects what our community wants for education in the future. • The ACT Government would welcome the support of the Opposition in realising the strategy's goal of ensuring every child receives a great education and the life chances that flow from it.
How will this strategy engage with industry?	<p>Students moving into jobs for the future.</p> <p>Engaging with the ACT economy through developing the future workforce.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will develop the knowledge and skills to operate in the changing world. • The Affiliated Schools Program will create stronger links between schools and the University of Canberra to support teacher training and education. • Brief and work with the Canberra Business Chamber???
How does this strategy apply to non-Government schools?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategy is intended for all education in the ACT. • The Director of Catholic Education and the Executive Director of the Association of Independent Schools have been members of the Partnership Table throughout the duration of the project, and involved in the consultation. • Because actions within the Future of Education strategy so closely support national reforms, we have a strong mandate to work closely as a

Future of Education – Q&A

		jurisdiction to ensure the best education for all young people.
Does this strategy address problems in schools such as bullying?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The four operating principles (learner agency, equity, access and inclusion) that underpin the strategy create an environment for students that embraces diversity in all its forms. • All learners and their families feel welcome and valued for who they are and what they can contribute. • Inclusive learning cultures ensure our schools reflect the global and connected world young people are living in. • The actions under the strategy also has a strong focus on wellbeing, in which it is seen as an essential element of the learning environment.
How does this work respond to X (previous reviews/reports)?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the consultation phase of the project, analysis of previous reviews and reports was undertaken, alongside submissions from key stakeholders, to those reviews and reports. • Outstanding elements from previous reform projects have been incorporated into the Future of Education strategy, as the overarching strategy for education in the ACT over the next ten years.

<p>How does this strategy relate to the recently released report by Gonski?</p>	<p>Analysis shows our community feedback agrees with 22 of 23 recommendations in Gonski</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recent release of the report “Through Growth to Achievement” by David Gonski, echoes what the ACT community had highlighted through the community conversation. • The report has three priorities, all of which are addressed explicitly in the strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Deliver at least one year’s growth in learning for every student every year.</i> This will be achieved through personalised learning and teaching strategies and informed by iterative evaluation of the impact of those strategies. • <i>Equip every child to be a creative, connected and engaged learner in a rapidly changing world.</i> We’ve already heard strong feedback from our community about more focus on skills of the future, and our strategy will highlight these skills including wellbeing, health and social skills. • <i>Cultivate and adaptive, innovative and continuously improving education system.</i> This will be achieved by setting higher expectations for students, educators and schools; helping school systems and schools to innovate and transparently report progress against outcomes; and limiting the burden of non-core activities.
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<p>Give me a really clear example of possible action under this strategy.</p>	<p>Continuum of Educational Support – Off Campus Flexible Learning Program</p> <p>Students at the Centre</p> <p>Strong Communities for Learning</p> <p>Systems Supporting Learning</p> <p>Facilitators of Learning</p>	<p><u>Continuum of Educational Support – Off Campus Flexible Learning Program</u></p> <p>On 7 June 2018 the <i>Partnering for Future Focused Learning</i> workshop was held at The Smith Family Building in Woden.</p> <p>The workshop provided an opportunity for key community sector stakeholders to test the conceptual service offering to meet both the learning and wellbeing needs of the young people who will be participating on the Continuum of Educational Support - Off Campus Flexible Learning Program (the program).</p> <p>The workshop provided the opportunity to further examine the importance of cross agency collaboration in delivering the program and to identifying the structural elements required to ensure that productive collaboration is achieved at the individual, family and system levels.</p> <p>Several themes (common within the FoE discussion) were raised at the workshop, these included; formalising collaboration, the importance of community sector representation at all levels of governance, communication to be clear and transparent, collaboration is a commitment from all parties and continuous testing and refinement of the service offer.</p> <p>The Continuum of Educational Support is a practical example of action under the Future of Education strategy.</p>
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2.

Portfolio/s Education & Early Childhood Development

ISSUE: ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS**Talking Points:**

- There are currently eight Secondary Scholarship holders including six new scholarships awarded for 2018 – four health and four teaching.
- Five Tertiary Scholarships were awarded in 2018, four to students undertaking teaching degrees and one to a student completing a degree in a health profession. The 2018 Tertiary Scholarship recipients attend the University of Canberra and the Australian Catholic University.

Key Information:

- The Education Directorate administers two scholarship programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in ACT public schools, totalling \$155,000.
- The Secondary Scholarship Program for years 11 and 12 students interested in a career in teaching or the health field; and
- The Tertiary Scholarship Program for students enrolled in teaching or an approved health course at a local ACT university.

Background Information

- A 2013-2014 ACT Government Budget commitment provided \$25,000 to extend the Secondary Scholarships to include five health scholarships.
- In 2017, the value of the Secondary Scholarships was reduced from \$5,000 to \$4,000 in order to expand the program to include scholarships for students wishing to pursue a Vocational Education and Training pathway.
- Ongoing eligibility for each scholarship is based on academic achievement and attendance.
- From 2009 to 2018 inclusive, fifty seven Senior Secondary students have been awarded Secondary Scholarships, 42 for teaching, 14 for health and one for Vocational Education.
- From 2009 to 2018 inclusive, 31 Tertiary Scholarships have been awarded, 26 for students undertaking teaching degrees and five for students studying an approved health degree.
- Applications for the 2019 Secondary Scholarships opened on 25 July 2018 and will close on 25 September 2018.
- Applications for the 2019 Tertiary Scholarships open on 19 November 2018 and close on February 7 2019.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 06/09/2018

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3.

Portfolio/s Education & Early Childhood Development

ISSUE: ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EDUCATION PROGRAMS**Talking Points:**

- The Student Aspirations Program promotes participation in leadership opportunities and supports the retention and attainment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, focusing on pathways and transitions.
- On 17 May 2018, forty-seven students from 11 schools attended the inaugural Broaden your Horizons session at the ACT Supreme Court. Students participated in a behind the scenes tour, mini legal career expo and mock trial to raise awareness about the pathways in the legal and justice sector. This event was developed in partnership with the University of Canberra and the ACT Supreme Court.
- The 2018 Leadership Day will take place on 22 November at the Botanical Gardens and the CSIRO Discovery Centre. Students will be given a guided tour of the gardens and learn the uses of different native plants. This will be followed by a scavenger style hunt at the CSIRO Discovery Centre.
- The Mura Awards initiative recognises student achievement and provides an opportunity for schools to acknowledge the consistent effort of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and to engage with families and the local community. The small bursaries attached to the Mura Awards encourages participation in education by providing some financial assistance for educational expenses such as excursions and uniforms.
- This year's Mura Awards opened on 24 July 2018 and will close on 21 September 2018. Fifty Mura Awards are available for students in years 4, 5, 6, 10 and 11.
- The Education Directorate employs 11 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officers (IEOs) who work across 13 ACT public schools. IEOs support schools to build their Cultural Integrity by:
 - Supporting schools to engage with families and community;
 - Supporting teachers to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across the curriculum;

- Providing advice and leadership to schools on celebrating significant events and milestones for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
 - Supporting schools to grow a culture of high expectations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; and
 - Facilitating successful student transitions between year levels, between schools and to post school study or work.
- School-based initiatives include:
 - Forrest Primary School operates a weekly Culture Club after school involving students, teachers and parents.
 - Ganbra at Wanniasa School provides a space where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are able to learn more about their culture, complete extra study and receive tutoring.
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students from Melba Copland Secondary School and neighbouring primary schools learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures through the school's Cultural Awareness Program.

Key Information:

- At the February 2018 ACT School Census there were 1,887 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in ACT public schools.
- From 2018, the Education Directorate is taking a new approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education that is strengths-based with a focus on the cultural integrity of ACT public schools.
- Cultural Integrity describes the environment a school creates to engage all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, to meet their needs and aspirations and to welcome their families and communities.
- This approach is firmly rooted in current leading practice, academic literature and consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- The evidence strongly suggests that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enjoy greater success in schools that are welcoming, reflective of their culture and community, and in which relationships support high expectations for all students.
- Students who feel welcome in the school environment and are able to see Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives represented through all parts of the school community are more likely to engage with education.
- Supplementary to school-based initiatives and programs, the Education Directorate provides several system wide programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in ACT public schools.

4.

Portfolio/s Education & Early Childhood Development

ISSUE: CLOSING THE GAP IN EDUCATION – YEAR 12 ATTAINMENT

Talking Points:

- In 2017, 70 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieved an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate, representing a year 12 completion rate of 57 percent. This is a decrease from the 2016 rate of 73 percent and the 2015 rate of 70 percent.
- Of the 70 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who completed year 12 in 2017, seventeen received a Tertiary Entrance Statement compared with twenty in 2016 and seventeen students in 2015.
- The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people participating in employment and/or study six months after leaving school has been monitored for the last four years (2014-2017). This proportion has varied between 78 percent and 93 percent for year 12 graduates, and 72 percent and 77 percent for school leavers.
- Whilst the proportion has varied, particularly for year 12 graduates, the differences between years were not statistically significant due to the small number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who completed the survey each year.
- In general, these results were similar to the overall ACT results which have been consistently above 90 percent for year 12 graduates and above 70 percent for school leavers for the last four years.

Key Information:

Year 12 Attainment

- At the February 2017 school census there were 116 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in a year 12 program in the ACT public system compared with 109 enrolments in 2016, 102 enrolments in 2015, and 83 enrolments in 2014.

School Leaver Data

- In May each year the Education Directorate conducts a survey of ACT year 12 graduates and school leavers who left school in the preceding year to find out what they are doing in terms of study and employment. The results provide important information that informs planning, development and provision of education and training choices for the young people of the ACT.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 07/09/2018

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- **Note:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people typically make up less than two percent of the year 12 graduate survey population and less than six percent of the school leaver survey population.

Background Information

- One target of the National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA) is halving the gap for Indigenous people aged 20-24 in year 12 or equivalent (Certificate II or higher) attainment rates by 2020.
- Longitudinal analysis of the 2003 to 2016 cohort showed that school retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students between years 10 and 12 fell from approximately 60 percent of the original cohort, to just over 45 percent by year 12. This is approximately 10 percentage points below the retention rate of non-Indigenous students.

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people employed and/or studying in the year after leaving school		
Year left school	Year 12 Graduates (95% Confidence interval)	School leavers (95% Confidence interval)
2013	93% (95% CI=83%-100%)	77% (95% CI=51%-100%)
2014	78% (95% CI=62%-93%)	73% (95% CI=50%-97%)
2015	89% (95% CI=79%-99%)	74% (95% CI=50%-99%)
2016	92% (95%CI=83-100)	72% (95% CI=46-98)

5.

Portfolio: Education & Early Childhood Development**ISSUE: CLOSING THE GAP IN EDUCATION – LITERACY AND NUMERACY****Talking Points:**

- In 2017, 90 Indigenous students were enrolled in Year 9 in ACT public schools and 53 Indigenous students (59 percent) participated in NAPLAN. Of the 53 who participated in NAPLAN in 2017, only 38 students also had participated in year 7. This illustrates the difficulty in using NAPLAN data to track the progress to a cohort of students.
- The Directorate acknowledges that the reasons behind withdrawals and absences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from NAPLAN testing can be personal and historical.
- It is important to note that caution should be exercised in the interpretation of NAPLAN data due to the relatively small population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Withdrawal is generally the highest contributor to non-participation by ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in years 3 and 5 in NAPLAN tests. Rates of withdrawal in 2017 remained consistent with 2016.

Key Information:

- In 2017, the ACT consistently had a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across public and non-government schools achieving at or above the national minimum standard for both reading and numeracy across the years of testing than was the case nationally. This was particularly the case in years 5, 7 and 9 reading, with a difference of higher than 10 percentage points.
- In 2017, 87.5 percent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander year 7 students in the ACT performed at or above the national minimum standard for reading which is significantly above the national figure for Indigenous students of 74.4 percent. In comparison 96.4 percent of non-Indigenous students in the ACT performed at or above the national minimum standard compared to the national figure of 95.2 percent. The results are similar for year 7 numeracy.

Background Information

A target of the National Indigenous Reform Agreement is to halve the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in reading, writing and numeracy by 2018.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 07/09/2018

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6.

Portfolio/s Education & Early Childhood Development

ISSUE: CLOSING THE GAP IN EDUCATION - ATTENDANCE**Talking Points:**

- The Education Directorate is taking a new approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education that is strengths-based with a focus on the cultural integrity of ACT public schools.
- Cultural Integrity describes the environment a school creates to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and to welcome and engage their families and communities.
- This approach is firmly rooted in current leading practice, academic literature and consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- The evidence strongly suggests that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enjoy greater success in schools that are welcoming, reflective of their culture and community, and in which relationships support high expectations for all students.

Key Information:

- At the February 2018 ACT School Census there were 1,887 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in ACT public schools.
- The National Indigenous Reform Agreement frames the intergovernmental reforms, targets and performance benchmarks to close the gap in Indigenous disadvantage.

Background Information

- In 2017, the ACT attendance rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was 83.8 percent, slightly higher than the national rate (83.4%) and a minor decrease from 85.4 percent in 2016.
- Eighty percent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the ACT attend public schools.
- Attendance is a school-based matter and maximising student attendance is the responsibility of school principals. In addition to school-based strategies, the Directorate's multidisciplinary Network Student Engagement Teams supports schools, students and their families to address attendance issues.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 07/09/2018

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7.

Portfolio/s Education & Early Childhood Development

ISSUE: KOORI PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

Talking Points

- The Koori Preschool Program provides targeted early childhood education to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, focussing on cultural integrity, parent engagement and transition to school.
- It provides children with rich, play-based learning experiences in a culturally safe environment that includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across the curriculum.
- The Koori Preschool Program works closely with the ACT Child and Family Centres to develop strong partnerships and link families with other programs that strengthen community and cultural connections.
- Each Koori Preschool is staffed by a qualified early childhood teacher and a preschool assistant.

Key Information

- The Koori Preschool Program provides targeted early childhood education to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged from three to five years.
- Children from birth to three years can attend a Koori Preschool when accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- The Koori Preschool Program operates at the following five school sites:
 - Kingsford Smith School
 - Narrabundah Early Childhood School
 - Ngunnawal Primary School
 - Richardson Primary School
 - Wanniasa School
- Each Koori Preschool operates over two days, delivering nine hours of preschool education per week at Ngunnawal, Richardson, Wanniasa and Kingsford Smith, and 12 hours per week at Narrabundah.

- The preschool assistant position is an Indigenous identified position. Currently three out of the five preschool assistant positions are held by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees.
- In addition to enrolment in Koori Preschool, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children can concurrently enrol in their local preschool from term three in the year prior to their preschool year. This supports access to 24-27 hours of free preschool education per week in the 18 month period prior to commencing kindergarten.
- The ACT Koori Preschool Network Initiative is partially funded through the Australian Government's Indigenous Advancement Strategy, Children and Schooling program.
- The initiative provides for the employment of an Early Years Engagement Officer based at Gungahlin Child and Family Centre. An additional Early Years Engagement Officer position is funded by the ACT Government and based at Tuggeranong Child and Family Centre. The officers are part of the Growing Healthy Families project team.
- Since December 2015, the Early Years Engagement Officers have worked closely with Koori Preschools to support participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (birth to five years) in education services, transition to school and family engagement.

Background Information

- February 2018 Census enrolment figures show a total of 86 students enrolled in the Koori Preschool Program.

8.

Portfolio/s Education & Early Childhood Development

ISSUE: NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM – LITERACY AND NUMERACY RESULTS AND PARTICIPATION

Talking points:

- The 2018 NAPLAN Summary Report showed that Canberra school students, together with students in Victoria and New South Wales, maintained their overall high performance, with ACT mean scores reported as the highest or equal highest in the nation in 16 of the 20 areas tested.
- The gap between ACT performance and that of other jurisdictions, in a number of areas, has narrowed, showing that other states are ‘catching up’, most notably Queensland and Western Australia.
- NAPLAN is only one piece of the puzzle when it comes to tracking our students’ ability in literacy and numeracy. Schools use lots of methods to assess and support students. We do this to make sure that we track and record meaningful data for all children.
- With this in mind, we are shifting our focus from achievement to progress. We want to see that we are making progress year on year. Because we come from a high base, we are more interested in the progress we are making as we are already maintaining high levels of achievement.

Key Information

- Education testing experts have verified that all results from NAPLAN 2018 – including the rescaled online scores for year 7 reading, year 9 numeracy and all grammar and punctuation tests – are valid and reliable. They have confirmed that both online and paper test results are comparable and can be presented on the same reporting scale.
- Analysis by ACARA identified that the 2018 online tests (Reading, Numeracy and Conventions of Language) were, overall, more difficult than the paper versions. The differences in difficulty were not evident in trialling data, possibly because of different levels of engagement of students knowing it was a trial and or the size of the trial group.
- ACARA and measurement experts engaged in this year’s analysis have attributed the increased difficulty of the online tests to several factors, including the introduction of tailored testing with more challenging pathways for higher achieving students

and/or the non-representative nature of the group of schools and students that opted in online (within and across jurisdictions).

- The ACT, along with VIC and NSW have maintained the high level of achievement of previous years.
- All ACT mean scores in 2018 were statistically similar to the 2017 results, except year 5 writing, which shows a significant decrease and was also evident in Tasmania. The writing decreases were evident nationally and in almost all jurisdictions across these year levels.
- The mean performance of ACT students in years 3 and 5 reading, language conventions and numeracy have remained relatively stable since 2012 while the performance of students in other jurisdictions has been improving. As a result the gap between the ACT performance and the national performance has been decreasing.
- There has been little variation in ACT years 7 and 9 results in any domain since NAPLAN testing began in 2008. Variations in ACT results have to a large extent mirrored changes in national results.

Background Information

- National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) participation includes students who:
 - sat the assessment, or
 - were classified as exempt.
- Non-participation includes students who were:
 - absent (those who were absent from school on test day); or
 - withdrawn (those who were withdrawn from the testing process through formal application by a parent or carer).
- Participation rates nationally, and in the ACT, have been decreasing since NAPLAN was introduced in 2008.
- Participation rates (based on the reading domain) for ACT students in 2018 were similar to the national rates for all year levels:

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
	%	%	%	%
ACT	94.3	95.8	94.1	89.0
Australia	94.7	94.9	93.8	90.2

- 2018 ACT participation data shows:

Year	Tested %	Exempt %	Absent %	Withdrawn %
3	92.6	1.7	1.5	4.2
5	94.4	1.4	1.3	2.9
7	92.5	1.6	3.1	2.7
9	87.5	1.5	5.2	5.8

- ACT withdrawal rates for all year levels were similar to the 2017 rates, but higher than reported nationally. Participation rates for the ACT in 2017 were similar to the rates in 2016 for all year levels.
- The Government and Directorate place a high priority on ensuring that all students engage in NAPLAN testing, and will continue to work with schools to increase NAPLAN participation rates.
- Principals and the school system regularly monitor and reflect upon ways to improve both attendance and participation. At the system level, the Directorate monitors participation patterns and provides this information back to schools for appropriate action.
- Regular communication reinforces that:
 - Principals are required to ensure that parents/carers of students are fully informed about the assessment program
 - All students in years 3, 5, 7, and 9 are expected to participate in NAPLAN tests
 - Students may be withdrawn from the testing program by their parent/carer. This is a matter for consideration by individual parents/carers in consultation with their child's school. Withdrawals are intended to address issues such as religious beliefs and philosophical objections to testing
- Adjustments are permitted for students with disability to support their access to the tests and facilitate maximum participation. Support is provided to schools to provide test materials in an alternative format for those students who meet the criteria.

9.

Portfolio/s Education & Early Childhood Development

ISSUE: NAPLAN ONLINE**Talking points:**

- NAPLAN commenced on Tuesday 15 May, with 106 of 116 (91%) ACT public, Catholic and Independent schools that sit NAPLAN, participating in online testing.
- The implementation of NAPLAN Online is a success for ACT schools and sectors, especially when you compare it to the experience of Australians during census night 2016.
- Significant majority of schools had completed testing by the end of the first week and all schools had easily completed testing by the end of the second week.
- Like any new program, some schools experienced administrative challenges in managing the test in a different way. However the helpdesk specifically set up to support schools and students during testing was able to calmly and confidently help schools where needed.
- Of the 106 participating online schools, one Independent school returned to paper testing for some of its students due to local network difficulties. The ACT Education Directorate was able to quickly support the school and its students in this approach.
- Ten independent schools sat paper tests this year and will transition to online after 2018.
- Education experts have verified that all results from NAPLAN 2018 – whether a child took the test on paper or online – are valid and reliable.

Key Information

- ACT Education Directorate has worked closely with all ACT schools and sectors in preparing to move to NAPLAN Online, with schools and teachers investing valuable effort into ensuring their schools are ready.
- NAPLAN Online offers benefits for students and teachers including better assessment, more precise information, faster turnaround of results and a more engaging experience. In particular, the use of ‘tailored testing’, available through NAPLAN Online, will challenge students with questions more suited to their ability.

- Students doing the paper version of NAPLAN complete a test with the same questions in the same order. As the online version of the test adapts to responses made by students, not every student doing the online version is answering the same questions in the same order. Many of the same questions appear in both online and paper tests and provide the link that enables all results to be placed on the same scale.
- Experts in educational testing have confirmed that both online and paper test results are comparable and will be presented on the same scale.
- A benefit of moving to NAPLAN Online is the faster receipt of more useful information for use in the classroom. The 2018 Student and School Summary Report (SSSR) is the first time that NAPLAN information has been received so quickly at the school and this timeliness will improve even further in the future. Schools received the SSSRs on Thursday 5 July 2018.
- The preliminary information in the SSSR provides valuable feedback on how students and cohorts of students within the school performed. For 2018, the SSSR contains the Reading, Numeracy and Conventions of Language results. Writing is not included as all writing scripts were marked outside of the system.
- Printed individual student reports that contain all results were provided to schools from 13 September 2018 for distribution to parents. During the transition years (to 2020), parents and carers will continue to receive Individual Student Results in August/September of each year.

Background Information

- ACT students participated in paper NAPLAN testing in 2017. No school transitioned to Online in 2017, as the ACT determined that the national systems required for NAPLAN Online were not ready and there was too great a risk that problems could arise during the testing week.
- Across Australia, states and territories have been working to move to NAPLAN Online by 2020. In the ACT, Canberra public, independent and catholic schools had been working closely together to implement NAPLAN Online.
- The ACT has achieved several important milestones in assessing school and system readiness through participation in a number of trials across ACT schools. The trials provided the opportunity for schools to prepare to go online, and their students to engage with the online assessments, gain familiarity with the online platform, the new test administration processes and practice classroom procedures.
- Significant local and national testing of the NAPLAN Online platform in 2017 has improved our confidence that schools had robust platforms to use for online testing in 2018.

10.

Portfolio/s Education & Early Childhood Development

ISSUE: PERFORMANCE OF THE ACT EDUCATION SYSTEM**Talking points:**

- ACT schools have regularly been either the top, or amongst the top, academic performers nationally, based on NAPLAN and other testing results.
- Much of this success has been due to socio-economic factors particular to the ACT and, in recent times, the advantage held by the ACT has been eroded by improved results elsewhere.
- Despite our successes, there are a significant number of ACT children for whom poor early life circumstances are most likely to result in lower academic achievement compared to students of similar ability but from a higher socio-economic background.
- The Government is committed to an approach to learning grounded in key principles of equity, fairness and universal access. We have completed the first stage of a system-wide process of consultation and policy development to map out the school education system we want for the future. Equity is at the core of this conversation and I am pleased to say that our community shares this view.

Key Information

- The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is the main Australian mechanism of comparing educational outcomes between jurisdictions and between schools. The ACT has performed well in national comparisons, achieving the highest, or equal highest, national ranking in most of the twenty domains since 2008. The relative performance has improved in some other Australian jurisdictions and the ACT is no longer as far in front as in previous years. However, ACT students continue to perform well, particularly in reading, grammar and punctuation and numeracy.
- Results from the 2015 rounds of the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS) and *Programme for International Student Assessment* (PISA) were published recently. Both assessments showed that the ACT as the highest or equal highest performing jurisdiction nationally.

- However, there has been no significant change in ACT year 4 or year 8 TIMSS results since 1995, and ACT performance relative to international results has slipped during this period. The performance of ACT students has declined significantly in all domains over the cycles on PISA.
- Between PISA 2006 and 2015, when scientific literacy was the major domain, ACT performance declined by 22 points, reading literacy declined by 37 points between 2000 and 2015, and performance in mathematical literacy declined by 42 points between 2003 and 2015 (equivalent to almost one-and-a-half years of schooling).
- The Government's focus in education is squarely on teacher quality. We have high expectations of teachers and reward them accordingly. We have great teachers in ACT public schools and our student results show this.
- The Directorate has a deliberate strategy to recruit, develop and retain great teachers in ACT public schools. As part of this strategy, we are ensuring teacher recruits have high quality literacy and numeracy skills.
- We are offering 100 scholarships to train teachers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
- Principals implement strategies to improve students' literacy and numeracy performance. These guide teacher practice and school decisions about the allocation of resources to improve outcomes. School strategies focus on supporting improved literacy and numeracy outcomes using individual, small group and whole class approaches. Schools continually monitor student progress and inform future actions.
- ACT schools use NAPLAN data to support decision making and determine strategies at the school level to improve student learning outcomes. However, it is only one tool used by schools to gather information about student performance, and when used in combination with classroom teachers' professional judgement and school based assessment, it can provide a detailed and useful representation of the whole student.

Background Information

- While not determinative, the impact of a low socio-educational background for a child is demonstrated early in the child's educational experience, and remains with the child throughout their school experience.

11.

Portfolio/s Education & Early Childhood Development

ISSUE: GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

Talking points:

- The Directorate's *Gifted and Talented Students* policy provides systemic advice to ACT public schools on current leading evidence-based practice in gifted and talented education.
- All 87 ACT public schools implement the policy. Each ACT public school principal and school board determines the programs and approaches used at their school to support the needs of gifted and talented students.

Key Information

- The Directorate's *Gifted and Talented Students* policy provides systemic advice to ACT public schools on contemporary evidence-based practice in gifted and talented education.
- All 87 ACT public schools implement the policy. Each ACT public school principal and school board determines the programs and approaches used at their school to support the needs of gifted and talented students.
- Under the policy, principals must provide information on their school website, and appoint a liason officer to provide a point of contact between the school, gifted and talented students and their families.
- School principals are responsible for ensuring the provision of developmentally appropriate educational strategies for all gifted and talented students enrolled at the school, which may include differentiation within the classroom, part or whole grade acceleration, specific programs within schools and/or carefully considered groupings of students with similar abilities.
- A scheduled review of the policy is well underway. The Directorate engaged specialist consultant, Gateways Education to review the current policy and provide recommendations based on contemporary research, leading practice and stakeholder consultation.
- In December 2017, Gateways Education consulted with Directorate and external stakeholders over two days, and also received written feedback.
- Gateways Education's recommendations have been delivered to the Directorate. Consultation with stakeholders has commenced and it is anticipated the revised policy and procedures will be released in term four, 2018.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 14/09/2018

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- During terms one and two, 2018, Gateways Education delivered four foundational professional learning workshops for teachers in ACT public and non-government schools.
- Since 2015, Gateways Education has been engaged to support the implementation of the current policy and has delivered:
 - a series of 12 professional learning workshops for school leaders, liaison officers and classroom teachers on gifted and talented education;
 - research papers on gifted and talented education theory and practice, nationally and internationally; and
 - written articles on gifted and talented education targeted at parents and the community that can be included in school newsletters.
- The professional learning workshop materials, research articles for teachers and newsletter articles for parents are regularly uploaded on the Directorate's intranet to be accessed by school-based staff. By providing these resources, the Directorate aims to build the capacity of all teachers in ACT public schools in gifted and talented education.

Background Information

- The current Policy was launched in 2014, along with a suite of parent fact sheets to assist parents and carers to understand the Policy and the role of ACT public schools in supporting gifted and talented students.
- During 2015-2018, hundreds of school leaders, liaison officers and classroom teachers from all sectors have attended professional learning workshops delivered by Gateways Education focusing on:
 - differentiated curriculum for gifted learners
 - assessment approaches with gifted learners
 - twice exceptional and underachieving gifted students
 - developing learning activities using Bloom's Taxonomy and other learning models
 - action research workshops.

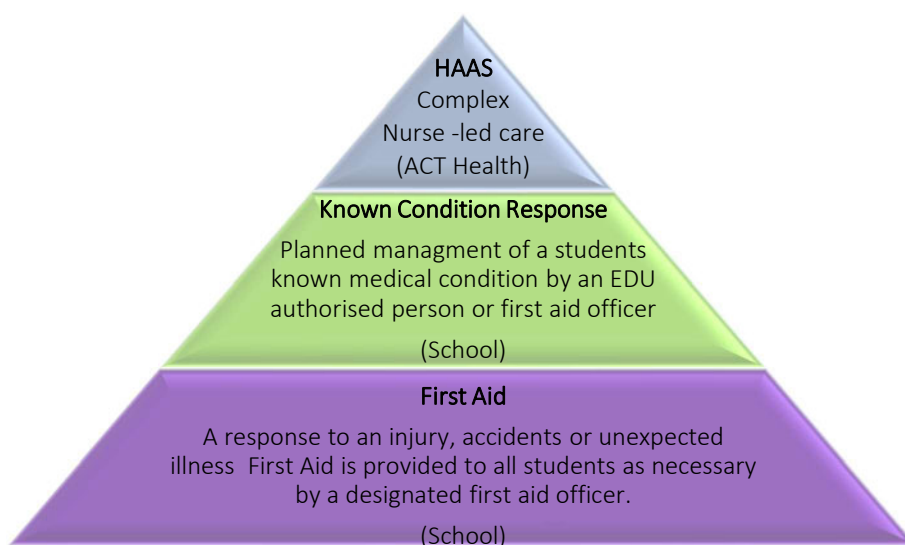
ISSUE: HEALTHCARE ACCESS AT SCHOOL (HAAS)

Talking points:

- The HAAS model is being fully implemented across ACT schools as a means of supporting students with complex healthcare needs, ensuring equitable access for students in mainstream and specialist schools.
- Education developed a guide to support ACT public schools in planning and managing supports for students accessing the HAAS program. The guide also supports schools in complying with the relevant policies and procedures under the HAAS model.
- Education continues to work in partnership with Health to deliver the HAAS program and to support schools in meeting the needs of their students.
- Education and Health have engaged the consultant firm Nous to conduct an evaluation of the HAAS program during Term 3.
- There are currently 62 students in the HAAS program across 38 schools.

Key Information

- The HAAS model is based on a three-tiered approach to healthcare in ACT public schools and involves a combination of Registered Nurses, First Aid Officers and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs). There are no longer full-time nurses in ACT specialist schools.



- The HAAS tier, previously only available as nurse-led care in specialist schools, enables equitable access for students who require health tasks or procedures to be undertaken during the school day or whose health needs cannot be managed safely through an Education *Known Medical Condition Management Plan*.
- There are currently 62 students on the HAAS program across 38 schools. This includes 20 students across the four specialist schools and 42 students in mainstream schools. Each student is supported by up to three LSAs who are trained and deemed competent by a Level 2 Registered Nurse. Examples of these tasks include:
 - care of tracheostomy
 - fluid, nutrition or medication via gastronomy
 - blood glucose testing and insulin administration
 - oxygen therapy.
- The training provided to HAAS workers is tailored to the needs of the student receiving the care. HAAS workers are also required to undertake CIT training in a ‘targeted skill set’ of three nationally accredited competencies that can contribute towards a relevant Certificate IV.

Background Information

- Historically, the HAAS program has provided nurse-led care to students with complex or invasive health care needs in specialist schools. A review of HAAS, led by ACT Health and involving parents, schools, and unions, was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 13 August 2015.
- ACT Education and ACT Health have collaborated to develop a revised contemporary model of HAAS designed to meet the ongoing healthcare needs of students across all ACT public schools.

13.

Portfolio/s Education & Early Childhood Development

ISSUE: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME AND EARLY INTERVENTION**Talking points:**

- As the Scheme matures, Education continues to work closely with the NDIA, local areas coordination services, the non-government school sectors and the Child Development Service to support streamlined access and planning processes for young people in our schools.

Key Information

- As of August 2018, 2,396 children are accessing Disability Education programs in ACT public schools. The majority of those students with a lifelong and permanent disability have already applied to access the Scheme. Students with disability who have not applied to participate in the NDIS to date may not need funded supports at this time, but may apply to join the Scheme if such needs arise at a later date.
- At this point in time the ACT Government continues to provide personal care in school and transport to and from school for students who meet Directorate eligibility requirements as in-kind services under the Scheme. These supports need to be included in individual NDIS packages in order for the ACT Government's in-kind contribution to be recognised. Policy work is underway at a national level to determine how these supports will be provided, moving towards full Scheme, as they are considered in scope for NDIS funding.
- As of September 2018, there are 355 students accessing the Special Needs Transport program.
- As of September 2018, there are 853 students receiving personal care supports at school.

Cross agency collaboration to strengthen implementation

- As implementation progresses nationally, the Education Directorate continues to participate in regular meetings with the NDIA, Child Development Service and the non-government education sectors through the NDIS Children and Families Portfolio Working Group and the NDIS Education and Employment Portfolio Working Group. Participation on these working groups is crucial in addressing operational issues that relate to the mainstream interface and identifying opportunities for greater collaboration and planning into the future.
- Two workshops for schools, families and transport providers about a potential model of supported transport under the NDIS were conducted in the ACT on 5 July 2018. Discussions in both sessions included the benefits and challenges identified in

achieving choice and control, key strengths of the current system and areas for improvement in the current model.

- Feedback from the national workshops is being used to inform advice to the Disability Reform Council on the future of supported school transport. No decisions have been made at this point in time.
- The

Early Intervention

- The Directorate's Support at Preschool team meets regularly with NDIS registered Early Intervention providers and continues to work in partnership with the Child Development Service to strengthen collaborative practice across sectors.
- The Directorate contributes funding for 1.8 early childhood teachers and 3 psychologists to work as part of the multidisciplinary team at the Child Development Service.
- The early childhood teachers coordinate Developing Kids Playgroups run at the Child and Family Centres at West Belconnen, Gungahlin and Tuggeranong, and at Holder. The program caters for children aged from 18 months to preschool with delays in their development and who are not eligible for support services through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).
- The two Directorates also collaborate to deliver play based activities for young children who attend the Mums and Bubs group at Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service. Allied health professionals attend the group to support children and families and ensure early identification of children at risk of developmental delay and provide assessment and referral to the NDIS for young children requiring early intervention support services.

School Leavers Employment Supports (SLES) initiative

- The NDIS School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES) initiative is an individualised approach to supporting employment for Year 12 school leavers with a disability. This initiative commenced in the ACT as a pilot in 2015 and is now being administered nationally through consideration of reasonable and necessary supports as part of NDIS planning discussions.
- The NDIA makes a reasonable and necessary decision on suitability of students to receive the School Leaver Employment Supports package valued at up to \$21,000 per year over two years. Supports are tailored to the individual needs of the student and range from packages including work experience in an open employment situation, job site training, travel training and activities that contribute to achieving an employment outcome as well as supporting linkages to ongoing employment support.
- Prior to 2018 this has involved staff in schools such as Transitions and Careers Coordinators and Disability Education Coordinators seeking consent from students and families to undertake a Functional Capacity Assessment to inform the NDIA's decision-making in relation to suitability of SLES.
- Schools no longer have a role in assessing suitability for SLES.
- The Education Directorate has supported the NDIA in scheduling two information sessions for participants, families and schools in August 2018 to discuss the NDIS and

employment for ACT school leavers and in particular the recent changes made to SLES and what information needs participants and families need to take to their NDIS planning meeting.

14.

Portfolio/s Education & Early Childhood Development

ISSUE: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS – FEE EXEMPTIONS

Talking points:

- When temporary residents apply for a visa, they are required to make a declaration to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) stating they have the financial means to support themselves and any dependants during their stay in Australia. This includes health and education costs.
- Dependants of temporary residents are charged international student tuition fees unless they fall into a fee exempt category.
- Temporary residents and their dependents must reside in the ACT for the length of their visa for their dependents to remain fee-exempt eligible. Temporary residents must also abide by their visa conditions as set by the Department of Home Affairs.
- As of 7 September 2018, 404 dependants of temporary residents have been granted fee exemptions in the 2018 calendar year.

Key Information

- Section 26 of the *Education Act 2004* (ACT) provides for fees to be charged to residents who hold a temporary visa under section 30(2) of the *Migration Act 1958* (Commonwealth).
- Under the Education Directorate's *Enrolment of the Dependants of Temporary Residents* policy, temporary residents are eligible for fee exemption for their children to attend an ACT public school if they are:
 - Employed or enrolled in identified Commonwealth or ACT Government programs
 - Australian government scholarship holders
 - Commonwealth assisted students or dependants of students whose tuition fees are fully paid by a publicly funded Australian higher education provider and are located in the ACT
 - professional academics visiting Australia to observe or participate in established research projects or employment at the invitation of an Australian tertiary institution or research organisation operating in the ACT

Cleared as complete and accurate: 07/09/2018

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- officers involved in government-to-government exchanges or reciprocities (Foreign Affairs and Defence)
- employed in the ACT in an occupation identified as having a skill shortage (must be listed on the Medium and Long Term Strategic Skills List – MLTSSL)
- refugees, asylum seekers and holders of an humanitarian or protection visa.
- During the last five years, approximately 2,417 dependants of temporary residents were granted fee exemption and were enrolled in ACT public schools. These numbers do not include the dependants of diplomats as they are enrolled directly through schools.

Background Information

- The charging of international student tuition fees for the dependants of temporary residents is a contentious issue that often attracts media attention. The current fee structure is as follows:

International Student Tuition Fees as at the 2018 school year	
Pre School	\$ 4,200per annum
Primary	\$ 11,100per annum
High School	\$ 14,500per annum
College	\$ 16,200per annum

- The Chief Minister agreed that from 2016, the Directorate will exempt the tuition fees for the dependents of students studying at an ACT university on a 500 (Postgraduate Research Sector) Visa Subclass, by research. In 2016, there were a total of 63 dependents of temporary residents on a visa subclass 500 (Postgraduate Research Sector) that have received fee exemption and currently enrolled in an ACT public school.
- In 2017, there were a further 29 dependents of temporary residents on a visa subclass 500 (Postgraduate Research Sector) that received fee exemption and have enrolled into an ACT public school.

15.

Portfolio/s Education & Early Childhood Development

ISSUE: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS – FULL FEE PAYING

Talking points:

- The International Education Unit (IEU) is responsible for coordinating the marketing of ACT public schools to international parents interested in having their child attend school in Canberra. The IEU aims to capitalise on the uniqueness of the ACT education system to provide quality academic and social experiences for international students.
- As at 7 September 2018, there are 529 full fee paying international students. 374 of these students are from China.
- The International Education Unit provides for the welfare and support of overseas fee paying students on a class 500 visa, whose parents are offshore. However, parents continue to have parental authority for their children.
- Currently the ACT Government has responsibility for the welfare and accommodation arrangements of 322 students. A further 150 students are in the care of Department of Home Affairs approved guardians and 57 students are over 18 and living independently.

Key Information

- As at 24 July 2017, there were 598 full fee paying international students, compared with 540 as at 24 July 2018. Numbers have reduced during the past year as the Directorate has been re-evaluating its marketing strategy and looking at diversifying its markets.
- Of the 2018 cohort, 374 are from China, 65 from Vietnam, 25 from South Korea, 14 from Cambodia, 14 from Hong Kong and five from Taiwan. Smaller numbers of students come from Europe, Philippines, Russia, Indonesia, India and Laos.
- International students on a 500 visa are protected by the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (ESOS Act) and the *National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007* (The National Code 2007).
- Under the ESOS Act, the welfare accountability for students under the age of 18 is the responsibility of the registered education provider. The Directorate is registered on the *Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students* (CRICOS Register).

Cleared as complete and accurate: 07/09/2018

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- The Director, International Education is nominated on the register as the Principal Executive Officer for the Directorate.
- An out of hours hotline is available for students and homestay hosts to use in case of emergencies and IEU staff are available out of hours where required.
- Officers from IEU also conduct face to face interviews with international student parents in China on an annual basis.

Current Fees for International Students

- Private fee paying students are students who come to study in ACT public schools on a 500 student visa subclass. These students are assisted by the International Education Unit to apply, enrol and study in the ACT. These students are not eligible to apply for fee exemption. (For further information see International Education Exemption Fact Sheet). Fees are based on cost recovery.

International Student Tuition Fees as at the 2018 school year	
Primary	\$ 11,100per annum
High School	\$ 14,500per annum
College	\$ 16,200per annum

- Short stay visits are \$420 per week and are for a minimum of five weeks and a maximum of 10 weeks.

Background Information

- International fee paying students have been enrolled in ACT Public Schools since 1990. Attracting international students to study in Canberra is beneficial to the ACT economy. In 2017-18, international students contributed approximately \$11 million to the Directorate. In 2016-17 all international education initiatives generated \$786 million for the Territory.
- As an international education provider, the Directorate is committed to providing a high quality experience for international students. International students are provided with information around Australian lifestyle, culture and values to assist with their transition to life in Canberra.
- International students studying in ACT public schools bring great diversity to the wider Canberra community through their involvement in volunteer work, local clubs and community events such as the Multicultural Festival and the Nara Candle Festival.
- The Directorate also works closely with the higher education providers in Canberra to encourage students to explore future pathways in the ACT.

16.

Portfolio/s Education & Early Childhood Development

ISSUE: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHS (STEM)**Talking Points**

- The ACT Government has endorsed the *National STEM School Education Strategy 2016-2026* and is currently aligning jurisdiction specific initiatives to the Strategy.
- The 2018-19 ACT Budget allocated \$5.26 million for the Academy of Futures Skills (the Academy), formerly named the Academy of Coding and Cyber Skills (EC LAB094). The Academy is scheduled to commence operations at the University of Canberra Senior Secondary College Lake Ginninderra in early 2019, which will serve as a north-side hub. This will complement the Centre for Innovation and Learning at Caroline Chisholm School, which will operate as the Academy's south-side hub.
- The ACT Government recognises that Canberra public school students will increasingly require science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) skills, including trans-disciplinary skills, capabilities and dispositions such as problem solving, creativity and collaboration, as they progress through their schooling to further education, training and employment.
- A range of STEM and futures-focussed learning initiatives are underway in Canberra public schools to provide quality learning opportunities in innovative learning environments. For example, on 11 May 2018 I officially opened the Centre for Innovation and Learning in Tuggeranong.
- To date, the Centre has received 54 teacher visits and approximately 1300 student visits, ranging from preschool to year 11. The range of activities at the Centre so far include robotics and coding, and science and engineering challenges. These activities give the students the chance to apply knowledge and skills across all STEM disciplines.
- Canberra public school students can also access a number of high quality STEM related learning opportunities through collaboration with national institutions, tertiary education providers and industry. These include

Cleared as complete and accurate: 14/09/2018

Cleared by: Director

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Questacon's Engineering is Elementary pilot and the ANU School Enrichment program.

- The ACT Government acknowledges the importance of engaging girls and young women in STEM education and further education, training and employment pathways. On this basis 20 STEMsells scholarships were offered to girls attending ACT public schools this year. STEMsells is designed to inspire young women in years seven, eight and nine to pursue studies in STEM while developing their leadership and business skills. In addition, funding for the Academy includes \$200,000 in scholarship grants for girls in STEM.

Background

National STEM School Education Strategy 2016-2026

- The Australian Government has identified a focus on STEM as a strategic priority for Australia's economic growth and competitiveness.
- In December 2015, Education Council (EC) endorsed the *National STEM School Education Strategy 2016-2026* (the Strategy). The Strategy is focused on action that lifts foundational skills in STEM learning areas, develops mathematical, scientific and technological literacy, and promotes the development of the 21st century skills of problem solving, critical analysis and creative thinking. It recognises the importance of a focus on STEM in the early years and maintaining this focus throughout schooling.
- Two goals are articulated in the Strategy:
 - to ensure all students finish school with a strong foundational knowledge in STEM and related skills
 - to ensure that students are inspired to take on more challenging STEM subjects.
- A national collaborative action under the Strategy was the establishment of the STEM Partnerships Forum (the Forum), chaired by the Chief Scientist, to bring together leaders from industry and the education sector (schools, higher education and VET) to facilitate a strategic approach to student engagement and achievement in STEM. Ms Meg Brighton, Deputy Director-General, represented the ACT on the Forum.
- At the 13 April 2018 EC meeting, ministers welcomed the Forum's Report, noting it will be an input into discussions of national reforms to be included in a new national agreement. Ministers also requested that senior officials provide advice on the Report, including prioritisation of its recommendations.
- Forum priorities align with work the Directorate is currently progressing, in particular the Future of Education initiative; the Academy of Futures Skills, the rollout of Chromebook devices to all years 7 to 11 Canberra public school students and teacher scholarships for STEM and languages.

STEM in Canberra public schools

- The Directorate is currently developing an ACT STEM framework aligned with the Strategy, which will provide a framework for future STEM-related initiatives in Canberra public schools.
- To support the delivery of STEM education initiatives in schools, Canberra public schools engage with a range of national science institutions and industry and research organisations to deliver STEM education programs to students, including:
 - the CyberTaipan competition was launched by the Australian Cyber Security Growth Network Ltd (AustCyber) and Northrop Grumman on 25 June 2018. Year nine and 11 students from eight ACT public high schools and colleges will participate in a 2018-19 pilot of this online competition, which builds defensive cyber security skills.
 - the CSIRO STEM Professionals in Schools program, a national volunteer program that facilitates partnerships between schools and industry to bring 'real-world' STEM into the classroom
 - the CSIRO Creativity in Science and Technology (CREST) program, aimed at supporting students in primary and secondary years to carry out open-ended science and technology investigations
 - the Australian National University (ANU) School Enrichment program, designed to provide students in Years 7-11 with flexible opportunities to experience the ANU, and offering a wide range of workshops in subjects including artificial intelligence, earth climate science, genetics, fractal geometry, planetary geochemistry and molecular parasitology
 - Questacon's Ian Potter Foundation Technology Centre, offering workshops that support STEM education and aim to develop students' lateral thinking and problem solving skills, including the Engineering is Elementary Program
 - the STEM Education Research Centre (SERC) at the University of Canberra, to promote participation in the Early Learning STEM Australia (ELSA) pilot, offers a play-based digital learning program for children in preschool to explore STEM
 - STEM extension programs including opportunities for high achieving students to undertake targeted Year 11 subjects while enrolled in Year 10, and tertiary subjects while enrolled in Year 12
 - the Australian Government Department of Human Services Chief Information Officer Group work experience pilot
 - school-based STEM events such as annual STEM festivals and workshops that utilise parent and community expertise
 - the ACE Science mentors program, operated from Melrose High School, allows participants from industry, government and tertiary education and training providers to mentor and support students from years 8-12, as well as to provide practical experience for years 9-10 and 11-12 students. The Directorate is looking to scale up the program in 2019 to include a northside secondary school.

- The Directorate also delivers teacher professional learning and a number of programs, resources and events to support quality STEM education in Canberra public schools, including:
 - the Computer Science Education Research (CSER) group at the University of Adelaide, to support teachers to engage with professional learning through a Digital Technologies MOOC (massive open online course)
 - the curriculum linked teacher resources provided by the Digital Technologies Hub (developed by Education Services Australia for the Australian Government Department of Education and Training)
the curriculum-linked STELR Project teacher resources developed by the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (ATSE)
 - the Principals as Numeracy Leaders (PANL) program designed to enhance school leaders' efficacy in instructional leadership, enhance school leaders' knowledge of essential numeracy content, and assist in the design of whole-school planning for numeracy improvement. In 2017, 38 schools participated in PANL round one and two. PANL round three commenced in March 2018 and is being delivered to a further 13 schools
 - reSolve: Mathematics by Inquiry; a national program that provides resources and professional learning to assist students to learn mathematics using inquiry. reSolve is managed by the Australian Academy of Science in collaboration with the Association of Mathematics Teachers
 - the Let's Count program aims to build the capacity of early childhood educators to partner with families to support children's early numeracy skills. It provides a strong foundation to 'notice' mathematics in play, building knowledge of parents and educators to accurately describe and extend mathematical development.
 - the partnering with the STEM Education Research Centre (SERC) to build preschool educator's capacity to embed STEM practices in their early childhood pedagogy aligned with the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), particularly in relation to spatial reasoning.
- In February 2018, the \$5.896 million Centre for Innovation and Learning at Caroline Chisholm School was opened. The establishment of the Centre serves as a focal point for the ACT Government's commitment to innovation and its engagement with the national agenda, with high quality programs and pedagogy provided through the Centre increasing the number of Canberra public school students engaging with STEM subjects.
- The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) report, released on 30 November 2016, found that the ACT has 70-85% of students at above the TIMSS proficient standard for Australia. The ACT also has a higher percentage of 'Advanced' and 'High International Benchmark' than the national percentage at this level. TIMSS reports every four years on the achievement of Year 4 and Year 8 students. Australia has participated in all five cycles.
- The ACT results in National Assessment – Science Literacy (NAP-SL) testing 2015 were similar to those of 2006, 2009 and 2012. ACT results were statistically similar to most

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other jurisdictions. In 2015, 60.5% of ACT students attained the 'proficient' standard, compared with the national result of 55%. The trends in NAP-SL results were similar to those observed in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). The next round of testing will occur in October-December 2018.

- The ACT's performance relative to other jurisdictions in relation to NAPLAN numeracy mean scores, has declined over the last two years. From 2010 to 2015, the ACT was placed first or equal first in years 3, 5, 7, and 9. In 2016, the ACT's mean score was placed first for Year 9 and second for years 3, 5 and 7. In 2017 mean scores placed the ACT second in years 3, 7 and 9 and third in year 5.

ISSUE: BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING**Talking points:**

- Bullying can have a lasting impact on everyone involved, including those who witness it, so it is important our schools, young people and families work together to create safe school communities for everyone.
- The ACT Education Directorate's *Safe and Supportive Schools policy* provides guidance to schools on promoting safe, respectful and supportive school environments.
- Each school is required to have processes and procedures in place to address and prevent bullying, harassment and violence, including cyberbullying. A preventative focus involves social and emotional learning approaches and digital citizenship programs that support the development of resilience, critical thinking and social skills.
- Just as bullying, harassment or abuse would not be tolerated in the classroom or on the playground; they are similarly not tolerated within online environments. Schools are advised to deal with online breaches of the school's behaviour policies as they would, had they occurred in the physical environment.
- If parents and carers believe that the school's response to bullying is unsatisfactory, or external advice is considered necessary regarding the interventions put in place by the school, the Directorate has processes in place which assist parents to escalate their concerns.
- The Education Directorate takes bullying seriously. The Directorate is a member of Australian Government working groups with a specific remit of addressing the issue of bullying (COAG Working Group, Safe and Supportive Schools Communities).

Key InformationPolicy and Procedures

- The *Safe and Supportive Schools (SSS) policy* provides guidance for ACT Public Schools on promoting safe, respectful and supportive school environments. The Student Wellbeing Section within the Education Support Office employs a Safe and Supportive Schools Executive Officer whose role includes supporting schools to implement the policy.

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- The policy reflects the guiding principles outlined in the *National Safe Schools Framework* which assists school communities with developing student safety and wellbeing practices.
- The Directorate's resources relating to digital citizenship and e-safety align with the SSS policy. The *Communities Online: Acceptable use of ICT – Parents and Students Policy* and related guidelines define acceptable use of ICT resources provided by the Directorate for students and parents.
- All students sign an *Acceptable Use of ICT Statement* agreeing to the conditions of this policy and to accept the consequences of any breach. This *Communities Online* policy details how appropriate use of ICT resources relate to school-based behaviour management policies and procedures and the relationship to online behaviour.
- Schools have codes of conduct, student welfare procedures and school values which provide a platform for embedding discussions about appropriate behaviour, respect and treatment of others.

Support for students experiencing or perpetrating bullying

- Students are encouraged to raise concerns and talk to an adult if they are experiencing bullying. At school they can seek support from teachers, school psychologists, youth support workers and other staff who are able to provide support to both victims and perpetrators of bullying.
- *Supportive Schools Contact Officers* (SASSCOs) are trained to provide support to students who have experienced bullying, sexual harassment and racism. The Safe and Supportive Schools policy requires every school to have at least one male and one female SASSCO who typically use conciliatory procedures to address bullying, violence and harassment between students.
- Restorative practices seek to repair relationships that have been damaged, including those damaged through bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence. They aim to facilitate a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the offender and reconciliation with the victim.
- Restorative responses aim to restore a positive learning environment for all parties. Research indicates interventions that work towards building or repairing relationships lead to better outcomes for all students involved.
- Schools will take strong actions if there is an immediate threat to the safety of students in line with the school's behaviour management procedures.
- Young people experiencing distress are also encouraged to contact Kids Help Line, Headspace or the Bullying, No Way! website that provides advice and links for young people, parents and carers to seek help.

Online / Cyber Bullying

- Schools are advised to deal with online breaches of the school's behaviour policies as they would had they occurred in the physical environment.
- The Directorate has partnered with the Office of the eSafety Commissioner to provide schools an enriching digital program aimed to educate our students to be safe online. Many schools have participated in a range of virtual classroom events (including webinars),

facilitated by the Directorate and Office of the eSafety Commissioner presenters. Virtual Classroom topics on offer include:

- Cyberbullying
 - Being a good bystander
 - Making good choices online
- The Directorate also provides parents and carers with information and advice about bullying, keeping children safe online and dealing with cyberbullying on the Directorate website.

Student, parent and carer voice in countering bullying behaviour

- The National Day of Action (NDA) against Bullying and Violence is held annually. In March 2018, 65 ACT schools registered and participated, including 47 public schools. On the NDA, schools participate in activities that promote taking a stand against bullying and violence and dedicating a focus to this important issue.
- The Minister's Student Congress (MSC) is made up of two representatives per ACT public school and typically meets twice per year. Through MSC and other Directorate initiatives, a culture of student voice is encouraged to stand up to and speak out on issues which affect children and young people, including bullying.
- Parents and carers are strongly encouraged to contact the school to discuss any concerns.

Curriculum

- The Australian Curriculum (AC) also includes content for students and teachers on social skills, getting along with others and ethical behaviours. Teachers can also access curriculum support materials on the Australian Student Wellbeing Hub www.studentwellbeinghub.edu.au
- All ACT Public Schools are required to intentionally teach social and emotional learning (SEL) approaches. For example -*Friendly Schools Plus* is designed to address bullying including cyber bullying. Many schools participate in *Kids Matter* and *Mind Matters* which support the development of resilience and social skills through evidence based programs.
- SEL professional learning opportunities are available to Canberra public school teachers.
- Guided by the AC, schools adopt cyber-safety programs which focus on critical thinking and understanding in social situations, overlapping with objectives from SEL approaches and Respectful Relationship programs. Schools tend to combine online awareness training and cyber bullying together, which spans a range of Learning areas, particularly Technologies and Health and Physical Education.
- Schools can access teaching resources from the many websites including: Think U Know (Australian Federal Police), Office of the eSafety Commissioner and Bullying, No Way! (Safe and Supportive Schools Community).

Using data to support student wellbeing

- Schools' Student Administration system allows documentation of data about incidents involving bullying and harassment. This assists schools to monitor numbers of incidents involving bullying, reflect and act on emerging trends as necessary.
- The Australian School Climate and Identification Measurement Tool (ASCIMT), a survey about the social environment or climate at a particular school; focuses on relationships between parents, carers, students and teachers, connection to the school (school identification) and engagement in learning. The tool includes five measures on challenging behaviours including bullying. Results are available to principals to monitor and evaluate safe and support school improvement strategies.

Parent and Carer with concerns about Bullying

1. In the first instance concerns should be raised with the relevant teacher.
2. Following this, contact can be made with the school principal to discuss concerns.
3. If the school's response is considered unsatisfactory, or external advice is considered necessary about the interventions put in place by the school, parents/ carers can contact:

The ACT Education Directorate Liaison Unit : The Liaison Unit can support families in managing concerns about ACT schools. The Liaison Unit will speak with relevant people within the Directorate's support office to facilitate the school and family to identify a solution. Phone: (02) 6205 5429

The Director for Families and Students: The Director provides the key contact for parents, students and the community to raise concerns when they have not been satisfied with the ACT public school response in meeting the needs of individual students.

Phone: (02) 6207 3723 Email: familiesandstudents@act.gov.au

- Parents, carers or students are also advised they may visit the website for the Office of the eSafety Commissioner (<https://esafety.gov.au/>) and the Bullying, No Way! (<http://bullyingnoway.gov.au>) website which provide education and contact information for young people, parents/carers and schools. The Office of the eSafety Commissioner also provides a complaints service for young Australians who experience serious cyberbullying.
- Parents and carers can access tips and advice for keeping safe online and dealing with cyberbullying on the Education Directorate website: www.education.act.gov.au/teaching_and_learning/learn-anywhere-ict-for-students/keeping-safe-online

Background Information

- The *Bullying. No Way!* website indicates that:
 - Approximately **one in four (27%) year 4 to year 9** Australian government and non-government school students report being bullied each term or more often.
 - Approximately **10% of students** in the government and non-government sectors experience bullying and harassment via mobile phone or internet technologies.
 - Experiences of **frequent school bullying is highest among year 5 (32%) and year 8 (29%)**.
 - **84% of students who are bullied online are also bullied offline.**
 - Peers are present as **onlookers in 87%** of bullying interactions.
 - **Hurtful teasing** is the most prevalent of all bullying behaviours experienced by students, followed by having hurtful lies told about them.

Portfolio/s Education & Early Childhood Development

ISSUE: SAFE AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS INITIATIVE**Talking points:**

- The ACT Government is committed to providing positive and engaging learning environments where young people feel connected, respected, and are fully engaged in education, regardless of their identity or background.
- Same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse people report school as a significant site where they experience or have experienced bullying, discrimination and isolation.
- Schools have important legislative and ethical responsibilities to ensure they are safe and inclusive environments for students, staff and families.
- We want everyone to be able to be themselves at school and to feel safe and welcomed as who they are. That's why we are funding the Safe and Inclusive Schools initiative.
- The Initiative has been developed by Sexual Health and Family Planning (SHFPACT) with input from parent groups, community agencies and key education stakeholders.
- Schools are not mandated to engage with this initiative. Schools simply access the support they need, if and when they need it.
- The Initiative does not produced any curriculum resources, however, schools continue to have access to the previous Safe Schools Coalition Australia (SSCA) Program curriculum materials, as they are available on the [Student Wellbeing Hub](#) (a website administered by the Australian Government).
- The cost of the Initiative is \$100,000 (GST exclusive) per annum over four years from 2017-18 to 2020-21.
- The Initiative has been available to all ACT schools since 13 March 2018.
- Over 90 participants have attended professional learning sessions since March and the Initiative has recently gained Teacher Quality Institute Accreditation for the professional learning module.

Key Information

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- The Safe and Inclusive Schools Initiative has been designed to support schools to create and maintain safe and inclusive environments for all students including young people that are same sex attracted, intersex or gender diverse.
- The Safe and Inclusive Schools Initiative is different to the former SSCA program.

The ACT Safe and Inclusive Schools Initiative

- In February 2017, the Education Directorate (the Directorate) engaged SHFPACT to develop a new initiative responsive to the ACT context.
- SHFPACT also continued to provide ongoing support for schools during this time.
- The goal of the Initiative is to build the capacity of ACT schools and education programs to develop and maintain safe and inclusive environments for all students regardless of their gender presentation/identity, intersex status or sexual orientation. The Initiative does this through:
 1. individualised support and advice for schools,
 2. recommendations of high quality teaching resources,
 3. supporting school staff and families to connect with relevant health and community supports and
 4. professional learning programs.
- If the school is seeking support for an individual student, the student's parents will be contacted to seek permission and will be invited to be part of the support process. If the school is seeking support to build its capacity (e.g. professional learning for staff or advice about policy and procedures) to enhance a safe school environment for LGBTQI students, parental permission is not required.

Other Roles of SHFPACT

- SHFPACT is a health promotion charity, assisted with funding from the ACT Government. In addition to the Safe and Inclusive Schools Initiative, *but separate to this initiative*, SHFPACT supports public, private and faith-based schools in Canberra to deliver effective, relevant, accurate and responsible sexuality education. This sexuality education is not part of the Safe and Inclusive Schools Initiative, or the previous SSCA Program.

Background Information

- The ACT Government is committed to ensuring every student attending school in the ACT feels safe and supported, to enable them to learn. Canberra Public Schools are guided by the Safe and Supportive Schools Policy (2016) which requires them to provide safe and supportive learning environments.
- The former SSCA Program was an Australian Government funded program designed to build the capacity of schools to support and actively include same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse students and reduce homophobic and transphobic behaviour in Australian schools.
- The SSCA Program has been the subject of focus from some members of the Australian community including concerns about content relating to gender, misconceptions about what is taught, and requests for parental permission for students to learn about particular content.

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- While similar concerns have been raised locally, other correspondence from local constituents, including young people, has affirmed the importance of such an initiative..
- In August 2016, the ACT Government made the commitment to fund a new initiative to replace the former Safe Schools Coalition ACT after changes to the Australian Government funded program limited school principal autonomy and made it difficult for school staff to respond to individual student needs.
- Research has shown that bullying, discrimination and isolation of young people who are same sex attracted, intersex and/or gender diverse often occurs in schools and this seriously impacts on student wellbeing. These experiences can negatively affect students' sense of belonging, safety and engagement at school, with subsequent impacts on education participation, achievement, health and wellbeing.
- While the data identifies that young people report experiencing high levels of homophobic and transphobic bullying at school, research also demonstrates that supportive and inclusive schools can make a significant and positive difference to student outcomes.

20.

Portfolio/s Education & Early Childhood Development

ISSUE: SCHOOLS FOR ALL IMPLEMENTATION**Talking points:**

- The Education Directorate is committed to providing education to meet the needs of each child and young person.
- As at 30 June 2018, all fifty Schools for All recommendations are being finalised.
- The Education sector is continuing an ambitious, evidence based, and single-minded focus on systemic cultural change. This focus ensures all children and young people in ACT Schools are placed at the centre of decision making relating to education policy and practice.
- The Schools for All Annual Report 2017 was published on 20 July 2018.
- The *Schools for All* Quarterly Report January-March 2018 is scheduled to be published on the EDU website in term 3 2018, followed by the final quarterly report (April-June 2018).
- On 28 February 2018 the Schools for All Oversight Group reconvened to review the progress of the *Schools for All* program over the past 12 months. The Oversight Group expressed confidence in the *Schools for All* Program Board and progress made. The Letter from the Oversight Group is at [Attachment A](#).
- A key area of focus moving forward will be ensuring the long term sustainability of changes made through the *Schools for All* program. The Future of Education initiative offers opportunities to embed cultural change.
- The key themes in Schools for All align with the key themes in the Future of Education initiative, which form part of our education strategy for the next 10 years.

Key Messages:

- An Expert Panel, comprising Emeritus Professor Tony Shaddock, Dr Sue Packer and Mr Alasdair Roy, released the *Schools for All Children and Young People – Report of*

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the Expert Panel on Children with Complex Needs and Challenging Behaviour (the Expert Panel Report) in November 2015. The Expert Panel Report made 50 recommendations to improve how the ACT education system supports the learning and wellbeing needs of children and young people with complex needs and challenging behaviours, including disability.

- The Government response acknowledged a strong cross-sectoral desire to build on existing reforms, improvements and initiatives where possible. Of the 50 recommendations, 49 directly related to Canberra Public Schools and 26 to Catholic Education (CE).
- For Canberra Public Schools, the ACT Government established the three-year *Schools for All* program with an investment of \$21.5M over the forward estimates to implement the 50 recommendations. The program aims to develop and reinforce a student-centred vision; and catalyse systemic and sustainable cultural change across the ACT education system.
- With all recommendations being finalised, the program will conclude later this year within the set three year timeframe. Whilst the program closes the work is ongoing through the Future of Education initiative.

Evaluation

- The Schools for All Program Board endorsed the *Schools for All Evaluation Plan* in September 2017 and the *Schools for All Evaluation - 2014 Baseline Development Report* (Baseline Report) in December 2017.
- A *Schools for All Interim Evaluation Report, 2018* (Interim Report) expands on the Baseline report, and contributes to measuring change in outcomes for students with complex needs and challenging behaviours over time (2014-2017).
- The Baseline Report, and the Interim Report will be included within the final *Schools for All Evaluation Report, 2019* (Final Report).
- The evaluation will assess the effectiveness of the *Schools for All* program in realising the objectives and outcomes sought by the program and make findings and recommendations based on quantitative and qualitative data.
- The Final Report will include additional measures of the broader cultural change outcomes that will be delivered by student-centred schools.
- The next Schools for All Program Board meeting will be held on 26 September 2018.

Carol Lilley
Chair, Independent Oversight Group
Schools for All Program



Ms Yvette Berry MLA
Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development
ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Minister

Schools for All Program Final Report from the Independent Oversight Group

Thankyou for your recent attendance at our Oversight Group (the Group) meeting. I am delighted to provide you with the final report for the Schools for All Program (the Program) on behalf of the Group.

Previous meeting of February 2017

After the Group met in February 2017, we reported that we did not see the need for continuing our role as the Program was progressing well. We provided the option for the Group to meet again towards the end of 2017 to gauge progress and you requested that we do that. This meeting was subsequently deferred and was held on 28 February 2018.

February 2018 meeting

The purpose of our last meeting (of which you attended part) was to:

- Update the Group on progress made by the Program for the past 12 months
- Provide the Group with information on the future direction of the Program and future planning towards supporting students with complex needs and challenging behaviours. This included ongoing work and sustainability of the program initiatives through the Future of Education and Student Resource Allocation projects.
- Reach a decision on the future role of the Group and any need for future meetings.

Progress / future direction of the Program

With the 12 month gap since our previous meeting, the Group noted the substantial progress that has been made over the course of 2017 and the completion of 11 recommendations in this period.

During our February 2018 meeting, we noted the:

- ongoing role of the Program Board involving Education and the other sectors
- ongoing use of project management elements in terms of risk and issues management and budget monitoring
- quarterly reports since our February 2017 meeting and the draft annual report for 2017. We suggested the Program consider how the 2017 achievements are communicated to the community (eg there is an opportunity to celebrate the progress of the Program and changes made)
- 11 recommendations which the Program Board has approved for closure as well as the additional projects on change and Program evaluation
- remaining open recommendations and their current status which are expected to close out:
 - for Recommendation 11.5, suspensions policy, in June 2018
 - in March 2018 for all other open recommendations
- transition of recommendations to business as usual operations to ensure that they are sustainable and embedded
- development of the Future of Education and how this links/is expected to link to Education's own strategic planning.

Achievements of the Program

The draft 2017 Annual Report includes many examples of achievements across the life of the Program. We see the Program as having been a very successful and positive change program which involved good planning up front and strong, continued commitment from the Education Directorate and the other sectors.

We noted some particular achievements such as:

- strengthened collaboration across sectors and with the human services sector
- cross sector projects that have been completed (eg parental engagement and Everyone Everyday, a tool kit for inclusion)
- Positive Behaviour Learning (PBL) framework which 35 schools are currently implementing with support from PBL coaches
- greater transparency and resources for staff, parents and the community (eg intranet and website for inclusion and well being)
- a greater focus on professional learning.

Future role of the Group

The charter of the Group states our role is to "Monitor and report against progress made to address the strategies to support students with complex and challenging behaviours."

Based on our review of the papers tabled and the discussion at the February 2018 meeting, we do not have any significant concerns or issues with the recommendations that have been closed in the last 12 months or the status of recommendations which are expected to close

shortly. We are also satisfied that the Program has achieved more than just the delivery of the 50 recommendations in that it has led to systemic and cross sectoral change.

In summary and as discussed with you when you attended our February 2018 meeting, we believe that our Oversight Group role can conclude and no further meetings are required.

Please contact me on [REDACTED] if you would like to discuss any matter in this letter further. On behalf of the Oversight Group, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to be involved in the Program and congratulate the Program Board and team involved for their achievements.

Yours sincerely



Carol Lilley
Chair, Oversight Group
13 March 2018

21.

Portfolio/s Education & Early Childhood Development

ISSUE: SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Talking points:

- The Education Directorate is committed to providing education to meet the needs of each child and young person.
- All ACT public schools provide reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of individual students.
- In ACT public schools students who meet the ACT Student Disability Criteria can access a range of disability education programs including
 - Inclusion Support Program (ISP) in mainstream classes
 - Small group programs located in mainstream schools (Learning Support Units, Learning Support Centres and Learning Support Units Autism)
 - Specialist schools
 - Hearing and Vision itinerant support
- We know that, at times, some students have a range of complexities in their lives that impact their access to education.
- We work with our students and their families to ensure they have access to education including through individualised programs.
- Individualised programs can include adjustments such as:
 - accessing the education program in an alternative setting (such as a different classroom or a space in the community)
 - access to distance education
 - building body breaks and sensory breaks into the timetable
 - working with community providers to offer the student a range of vocational education options
 - transition programs focusing on moving into the workplace and/or community for student in their final year of schooling.
- A new policy framework and resourcing model to support the needs of students with disability is being developed as part of the Student

Resource Allocation (SRA) Program and is linked with the Future of Education strategy development.

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Funding for Students with Disability

- The 2018-19 Budget Initiative – *‘More schools, better schools-Needs based funding for students with a disability’* funds the cost associated with recent growth in student numbers and ensures the continuation of existing resource levels.
-
- Total funding for students with disability is based on a needs assessment through the Student Centred Appraisal of Needs model (SCAN). The total funding requirement is primarily driven by student need combined with student numbers. The number of students with disability has grown in recent years from 2,094 in 2015 to 2,293 in 2018. The total cost of students with a disability is budgeted to be \$78.593 million in 2018-19. The total cost includes ACT and Commonwealth Government funding. The primary driver for movements in the average cost per student each year is indexation of funding to provide for increased wage and salary costs.
- The majority of the total cost of students with disability is provided direct to schools through the Schooling Resource Allocation model and is allocated by schools based on student need. Additional services are also provided through allied health professionals and other supports.

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Key Information

- The August 2018 school census shows 2396 students in ACT public schools accessing disability education programs and services.
- Across the system, schools are provided with additional resources, including staff, professional learning and expert guidance to make reasonable adjustments to support the access and participation of students with disability.
- The ACT Government has invested in a number of training courses to build the capability of teachers in ACT public schools to enable them to better support students with disability.
- With a mix of face-to-face and online learning opportunities, teachers and other school staff can access quality professional learning when they need it and at times that suit them. There are a number of high quality face to face professional learning opportunities for staff including wellbeing workshops and trauma training.

Students with Autism

- Data informing the August 2018 school census identified 816 students with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) across Kindergarten to Year 12 in ACT

public schools. Students with autism are enrolled in a range of programs and ACT public schools:

- 363 students are enrolled in mainstream classes with support through the Directorate's Inclusion Support Program resourcing
- 341 students are enrolled in Learning Support Centres and Learning Support Units within mainstream settings, which provide smaller group sizes and increased teacher to student ratios.
- 112 students are enrolled in one of four ACT Specialist Schools.
- Placement in disability education programs is based on the need of the individual student and decisions about placement are made in consultation with parents, carers, families and schools. Students participating in these programs have an Individual Learning Plan (ILP), developed collaboratively by parents, carers, the school, and the student themselves when appropriate.

Disability Standards for Education e-learning

- Since 2017 the online training course for Disability Standards for Education 2005 (DSE) has been mandated for all school-based employees and targeted areas with the Education Support Office. The objective of the training is to ensure all staff are aware of their obligations under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the DSE.
- The course provides training specific to a wide range of settings including preschools, primary schools, high schools, senior secondary colleges and Education Support Office. This training is now part of the Directorate's mandatory online induction program.

Targeted courses

- The Directorate offers online targeted courses, based on international expertise and adapted to local needs to build the capacity of teachers and leadership teams in ACT public schools. The courses assist teachers to offer individualised support for students with disability.
- The courses that are accredited with the ACT Teacher Quality Institute, and can count towards teacher registration include:
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder
 - Dyslexia and Significant Reading Difficulties
 - Speech, Language and Communication Needs
 - Motor Coordination Difficulties
 - Understanding Hearing Loss
 - Understanding and Managing Behaviours.

Network Student Engagement Teams (NSET)

- NSETs are multidisciplinary teams within the Student Engagement Branch that provide additional support for students with disability and also support teachers access to evidence based quality professional learning opportunities.
- NSET teams work with school leaders to build the capacity of schools and teaching teams to support the participation and engagement of students.
- As part of the response to the Schools for All report, allied health professionals were recruited in 2016 to support the multidisciplinary work of the Network Student Engagement Teams.

Targeted Preschool Support (SAP)

- The NSET Support at Preschool (SAP) team works with the school executive and preschool teams to support the inclusion of children with developmental delay and disability in ACT public preschools

Disability Education Coordinator (DECO)

- Each school has a designated DECO who is responsible for coordinating supports for students with disability and also support teachers access to evidence based quality professional learning opportunities.

Portfolio/s Education & Early Childhood Development

**ISSUE: WITHDRAWAL SPACES IN SCHOOLS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS
WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS****Talking points**

- ACT Education Directorate is committed to creating safe and supportive learning environments for all students.
- The ACT Education Directorate provides ongoing training and development to staff to assist them support students with complex and challenging behaviour, and to provide safe and supportive learning environments for all students.
- The 'Safe and Supportive Schools' policy and procedures provides information and guidance to schools on the use of restrictive practices including understanding the difference between a "withdrawal space" and "seclusion".
- The ACT Government has provided \$5.6 million over the forward estimates to support the enhancement and development of sensory spaces into schools where students are able to be supported in managing their sensory needs.
- In 2015 the Education Directorate carried out an audit of existing withdrawal spaces. The audit found that schools use a variety of quiet spaces including tents, teepees, rooms adjacent to classrooms and outdoor spaces to support students.
- The Education Directorate has developed factsheets and professional learning for schools to support them in creating sensory spaces within the school environment.
- Education is working closely with the new ACT Office of the Senior Practitioner (OSP) to explore how the role will work with schools and the Education Support Office. The OSP has been established as part of the ACT Government's commitment to improving the lives of all people who are vulnerable and potentially subject to restrictive practices.

Key Information

- Withdrawal spaces may assist students to manage their sensory needs and safely withdraw if they require time away from busy school environments, which can form part of a behaviour support strategy. Withdrawal spaces may be indoor or outdoor areas that are safe and supervised.
- “Withdrawal” is defined in the Directorate’s Safe and Supportive Schools Policy as “time away from classroom activity in a calming area where doors are not locked and a student is not prevented from leaving”.
- Public schools have various types of spaces available to students requiring a quiet space to help manage their behaviour which include: tents, teepees and soft furnishing in corners of classrooms; rooms adjacent to classrooms where line of sight can be maintained by the classroom teacher; and fenced courtyards adjacent to classrooms providing children with safe access to an outdoor space during class time.
- The Directorate sought expert advice to inform the design of a range of appropriate learning areas within new schools to support students with complex needs and challenging behaviour. This advice has supported the Directorate in planning any changes to school infrastructure.
- The ACT Government continues to target upgrades to safe, sensory learning spaces in public schools through an Expression of Interest process. This process requires schools to work with occupational therapists in Network Student Engagement Teams to develop their proposals.
- A professional learning workshop , ‘Designing Positive Classroom Environments and Safe Sensory Spaces’, has been developed and is being facilitated by Occupational Therapist from Education’s Network Student Engagement Teams. The workshop links changes to environment with existing frameworks utilised by schools including the *National School Improvement Tool* and *Great Teaching by Design*.

Restrictive Practice - Guidance for Schools

- It is important to differentiate “withdrawal spaces” with “seclusion”, a form of restrictive practice. Information for schools about this difference is provided in the Safe and Supportive Schools policy and procedures.
- These policy and procedures also provide information and direction to schools about the use of restrictive practice, such as physical restraint; as an emergency response when school staff need to act to prevent or reduce the risk of harm to an individual or group of people.
- Materials to support the policy have been developed for Principals and school staff and include fact sheets, FAQs, checklists and planning tools. They are available through the Education Intranet.
- As part of the *School Administration System* implementation, schools are being supported to upload information such as students’ Positive Behaviour Support plans and document student incidents. This includes documenting when a restrictive practice as protective action and an emergency response is used. This provides the means to review incident data, proactively plan when an incident has occurred and enables the relevant personnel to be notified.

- Education has also contributed to the Restrictive Practices Oversight Steering Group (RPOSG), a time-limited, group of executive leaders representing government directorates and independent statutory bodies, established to consider issues relating to restrictive practices in the ACT. Co-chaired by Education Directorate and the Community Services Directorate (CSD), the group will continue to oversight ongoing work related to the safeguarding against the unreasonable and unnecessary use of restrictive practices, including a legislation review and the development of policy. Their work so far has included:
 - Developing the Restrictive Practices Overarching Principles for the reduction and elimination of restrictive practice in the ACT. They were endorsed by the Strategic Board on 2 November 2016. These Principles are now able to be shared broadly and used across Government.
 - Contributing to Community Services Directorate's project and consultation process to develop an Office of the Senior Practitioner.

Office of the Senior Practitioner

- The Quality, Complaints and Regulation Branch in the Community Services Directorate has established and resourced a new ACT Office of the Senior Practitioner (OSP) for the reduction and elimination of restrictive practices. The Senior Practitioner, Ms Mandy Donley, from Victoria Department of Education and Training, commenced in the role 5 July 2018.
- The ACT OSP has been established as part of the ACT Government's commitment to improving the lives of all people who are vulnerable and potentially subject to restrictive practices, as well as supporting and upholding their human rights. The ACT OSP will also enable the ACT Government to meet its commitments under the National Framework for Reducing and Eliminating the Use of Restrictive Practices in the Disability Sector and the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework.
- Education is working closely with the OSP to explore how the role will work with schools and the Education Support Office. Meetings between Education and the ACT OSP commenced in July.
- Education will work with the Senior Practitioner to develop Guidelines which will provide further clarity about sections of the Senior Practitioner Act (2018), particularly in the areas of
 - Positive Behaviour Support Planning,
 - Panel approval processes for Positive Behaviour Support Plans with a Restrictive Practice as an emergency response and
 - Complaints management.

ISSUE: SUSPENSIONS IN ACT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Talking points

- In 2017, the overall suspension rate for ACT public school K-12 population was 2.5 percent, an increase of 0.2 percentage points from 2016.
- In 2017, the suspension rate for ACT public high schools was 5.9 percent compared to 5.2 percent in 2016, an increase of 0.7 percentage points.
- Overall the 2017 rates of students suspended, suspension incidents and suspension days is very similar to 2016.
- The Education Directorate has recently consulted with the ACT community on the Directorate's Suspension, Exclusion and Transfer Policy and support documents which have recently been reviewed. The revised policy will update guidance to school on suspension, exclusion and transfer including strategies to reduce suspensions.
- The Directorate is currently reviewing feedback from the consultation process to inform refinement of the revised policy.
- This process has included a review of national and international literature and practice in this area and consultation with a range of key stakeholders.
- The revised policy includes a focus on a prevention and early intervention approach to reduce the incidence of behaviours that potentially lead to suspension, exclusion and transfer. The revised policy outlines the school's role in setting up responsive environments with whole school approaches to positive behaviour.
- A targeted support response in each school network to support students who have been suspended is provided by the Network Student Engagement Teams (NSET). These multi-disciplinary teams work with the student, family and school to address the underlying issues that contribute to suspension. The NSET response is tailored to the needs of the individual student and may include a social worker, senior psychologist, speech pathologist, occupational therapist, and specialist teachers in behaviour support, disability education or engagement. The particular staff involved will depend on the issues impacting on the child or young person's engagement in learning.
- The Continuum of Education Support (CES) model is a coherent strategy that focuses on the provision of alternative education programs and/or other flexible

learning options for students at risk of disengaging from secondary school. This model is being implemented in all ACT public high schools in 2018.

Key Information

- There has been a steady increase in enrolments for ACT Public schools across the reporting period. Considering data relative to enrolment numbers provides a comprehensive picture, allowing data to be compared across years.
- In 2017, 2.5 percent of the K-12 public school student population was suspended at least once; an increase of 0.2 percentage points from 2016.
- In 2017, there was a total of 5 suspension incidents per 100 students, which was the same rate as 2016.
- In 2017, there was a total of 10 suspension days per 100 students which shows an increase of one day per 100 students compared to 2016.

Overall the rate of students suspended, suspension incidents and suspension days was similar to 2016.

Use of Suspension, Transfer or Exclusion in ACT Public Schools

- Principals may suspend students from ACT Public Schools for up to 15 continuous days, the Director-General may approve a suspension for up to 20 days, following a recommendation from a school Principal or Director School Improvement.
- If a student is suspended for seven or more days in a school term the Principal must provide reasonable access to counselling.
- A re-entry meeting must be convened by the principal on return to school.
- Reasonable attempts must be made to inform parents/ carers of the decision and their right to appeal.
- The principal may recommend to the Director-General that a student be *transferred* to another government school. A transfer is used when:
 - repeated attempts with comprehensive support to engage the student in effective participation in school are unsuccessful; or
 - an incident of misbehaviour is so severe that re-entry to the school concerned would be unreasonable for all stakeholders; and
 - It is in the best interest of the student; and
 - The parent/carer is not acting on the advice of the Directorate to voluntarily move their child.
- Principals may also recommend to the Director-General that a student be *excluded* from all ACT Public Schools.
- There have been no recommendations to exclude in the time period 2008 to present.

Support for students who have been suspended.

- Network Student Engagement (NSET) multi-disciplinary teams provide a targeted response, working with the student, family and school to address the underlying issues that contribute to suspension.

- The NSET team assigned to the response is tailored to the needs of the individual student and may include a social worker, senior psychologist, speech pathologist, occupational therapist, specialist teacher in behaviour support, disability education or engagement. The particular staff involved will depend on the issues impacting on the child or young person's engagement in learning.
- A review of the Directorate's Suspension, Exclusion and Transfer Policy is in progress.
Refer talking points
- The draft of the reviewed policy recognises the government's agreement to Recommendation 11.5 of *Schools for All* report which makes reference to alternative options to out-of-school suspensions. One of the objectives of the policy review is to support schools consider other options to suspension where appropriate.
- ACT Public Schools suspension data is currently published on the Directorate's website on the Safe and Supportive Schools Page. This aligns with Recommendation 11.6 of the *Schools for All* report where the Education Directorate agreed to examine options for high level reporting of proportions of suspensions, transfers and exclusions.

Background Information

- Suspensions in ACT public schools continue to create community and media interest.
- Sometimes suspension from school is necessary and is used in accordance with Section 36 of the Education Act (2004). This may include situations where the principal decides action is required to address a situation where a student threatens the safety and wellbeing of another student attending the school, a member of the staff of the school or another member of the school community.
- On 4 September, Michael Battenally, on behalf of *ACT Principal's Association (ACTPA)* spoke to ABC Radio Canberra about the revised policy. Mr Battenally is also the Principal of Melba Copland Secondary School and College.
- The article quoted ACTPA having significant concerns about the revised policy with reference to:
 - Principals ability to suspend being lessened.
 - What behaviours will now qualify for a suspension;
 - That suspensions were now a tool to be used primarily in cases of occupational violence or where someone's safety was endangered;
- While a greater focus has been placed on early intervention and prevention for the behaviours that lead to suspension and considering alternatives to out of school suspension, the legislation has not changed which means the reasons a Principal may suspend have not changed.
- The P&C were also interviewed on the same day and the article quoted them as *backing the revised policy* with reference to suspensions not necessarily supporting behavioural change and may result in further disengagement from school.

Suspension Data

Each year, the Directorate records and analyses suspension data to assist with planning and improvement.

Year		Primary Schools	High Schools	Colleges
2014	Total Enrolments	21,429	9,841	6,258
	Suspension Incidents	808	915	38
	<i>Incidents per 100 Students</i>	4	9	1
	Suspension Days	1398	2103	104
	<i>Days per 100 Students</i>	7	21	2
	Students Suspended	317	487	33
	<i>Suspension Rate</i>	1.5 percent	4.9 percent	0.5 percent
2015	Total Enrolments	22,442	9,947	6,446
	Suspension Incidents	723	1,079	36
	<i>Incidents per 100 Students</i>	3	11	1
	Suspension Days	1312	2192	87
	<i>Days per 100 Students</i>	6	22	1
	Students Suspended	318	560	32
	<i>Suspension Rate</i>	1.4 percent	5.6 percent	0.5 percent
2016	Total Enrolments	23,630	10,258	6,487
	Suspension Incidents	819	1,111	63
	<i>Incidents per 100 Students</i>	3	11	1
	Suspension Days	1,460	2,106	144
	<i>Days per 100 Students</i>	6	21	2
	Students Suspended	343	535	55
	<i>Suspension Rate</i>	1.5 percent	5.2 percent	0.8 percent
2017	Total Enrolments	24,739	10,571	6,680
	Suspension Incidents	886	1,229	55
	<i>Incidents per 100 Students</i>	4	12	1
	Suspension Days	1,652	2,464	150
	<i>Days per 100 Students</i>	7	23	2
	Students Suspended	384	621	48
	<i>Suspension Rate</i>	1.6 percent	5.9 percent	0.7 percent

Suspension Data Source: Planning and Analytics Branch, ACT Education Directorate 2017.

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Portfolio/s Education & Early Childhood Development

ISSUE: MENTAL HEALTH AND SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS**Talking points:**

- The ACT Government is committed to the wellbeing and mental health of students in all ACT schools.
- In ACT public schools, students, parents/carers and teachers have access to a school psychologist. School psychologists work across behavioural, social, emotional and learning domains to support a student's wellbeing and learning.
- 87 ACT public schools are being supported by 68.1 FTE school psychologists and senior psychologists¹¹ providing direct, indirect and universal supports.
- Data (school psychologist annual report 2017) indicates that 15.32 percent of ACT public school students' accessed support from a school psychologist, this is higher than the national average of 11.5 percent (Australian Government Department of Health 2015). While the service is heavily utilised it is important to ensure it remains agile and focussed on student needs.
- In the environment of increased need for mental health support and learning delays for students, ACT Government committed to resource 20 additional psychologists by 2020. Five new psychologists commenced in ACT public schools in 2018. Ten new psychologists will be recruited to commence employment in 2019, with a further five psychologists to start 2020.
- An internal review of the ACT Education psychology service commenced in March 2018. The purpose of the review is to strengthen the child-centred model of service, which is strategically aligned with, best practice and early intervention and prevention.
- In addition to school psychologists, the Network Student Engagement team in each of the Canberra networks provides multidisciplinary input

¹ The schools psychologists and senior psychologists FTE varies throughout the year due to factors such as staff movement, leave and change of work-hours as well as the amount of psychologist points purchased by schools.

from professionals comprising of social worker, speech pathologist, occupational therapist and specialist educators.

- School Psychology Service is part of the wider mental health system which exists for the community in the ACT.
- Currently there is strong collaboration and partnerships with community and government agencies to provide service delivery and mental health promotion and prevention, including:
 - ACT Mental Health;
 - Headspace;
 - the Australian Child & Adolescent Trauma, Loss & Grief, ANU College of Medicine, Biology and Environment; and
 - ACT Child Development Service.
- There are a number of joint initiatives supporting students across all ACT school sectors.
 - Headspace deliver the mental health promotion and prevention frameworks, KidsMatter Primary and MindMatters in primary and secondary schools across the ACT. These initiatives are a partnership between education and health sectors and are funded by the Australian Government and *beyondblue*.
 - The ACT is one of the sites for the implementation of LifeSpan, a systems approach to suicide prevention, which was developed by the Black Dog Institute. ACT Health is taking the lead and ACT Education is partnering with them to ensure professional learning and training programs are delivered to educators, student service teams, psychologists and students in schools to prevent youth suicides in our schools.
 - The National Education Initiative (NEI), to be launched in November 2018, will support school communities (primary and secondary) to support the mental health of children and young people from the day they enter the education system to the end of year 12 (birth to 18 years).

Key Information

Increase in school psychologists (FTE) between 2015 and 2018	
June 2015	52.16
February 2016 - post Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA)	56.16
February 2017 – increased allocation under 2016-17 budget	62.5
March 2018 – increased allocation under 2017-18 budget	68.1

- The allocation of school psychologists to schools is based on student enrolment and the targeted needs of students in schools. Staffing for 2018 is:
 - Total school psychologists supporting students and schools: 68.1 FTEs.
 - 49.4 FTE are deployed within schools
 - 11.3 FTE Senior Psychologists within Network Student Engagement Teams (NSET) working with schools to support students with complex and challenging behaviours, as well as providing support to school based psychologists.
 - 0.6 FTE Senior Psychologist is working with Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) team. This is a temporary position for two years (2017 – 2018) aimed to strengthen trauma sensitive practices within the PBL framework.
 - 1 FTE Senior Manager for Clinical Practice
 - 1 FTE Manager of School Counselling.
 - 1.8 FTE additional school psychologist hours purchased by schools. Some schools may choose to purchase additional psychologist time (also known as points) for their schools. This is funded through the annual funding allocation provided to schools.
 - 3 FTE psychologists are supporting families and children to be school ready through the Child Development Service.
- The 2017-2018 Budget provided resourcing for five full-time school psychologists for ACT public schools, these psychologists commenced in January 2018.
- The 2018-19 Budget will resource an additional 10 full-time school psychologists for ACT public schools. These 10 psychologists will be recruited to commence employment with the Education Directorate in 2019.
- Agreement from the 2018 budget bid was for 15 psychologists to meet the ACT Governments commitment of 20 additional psychologists, so five psychologists will commence in 2020.

Future Directions

- There will be an increased focus on early intervention and prevention of student difficulties to ensure that learning issues and mental health are addressed before they become established and resistant to change. The benefits of reduced mental health concerns will be seen in greater levels of engagement in schooling and participation in the community, and savings for government.
- The service delivery will include varied and innovative ways of service delivery for children to address their learning and well-being needs.

- Increased focus on developing professional capacity of psychologists to provide targeted intervention to students presenting with a history of abuse or neglect.

Background Information

- A psychologist's work is informed by an early intervention and prevention model which is ecologically informed. This means that all parts of student's life (family, classroom, peers etc.) can be worked with to address student wellbeing and learning concerns.
- School psychologist form an important part of the mental health approach in the community by identifying and working with personal difficulties early in the life of the problem, responding to an immediate crisis, working with school staff to put in preventative strategies at the whole school level, working with the family and referring moderate to severe mental health issues to other specialists.
- The percentage of students with a diagnosed mental health disorder who accessed school based mental health support has gone from 19.2 per cent in 1998 to 54 per cent in 2015 throughout Australia (Australian Government Department of Health 2015). In the environment of increased need for mental health support for students, ACT Government committed to additional resources for 20 more psychologists in schools by 2020.

Portfolio/s Education & Early Childhood Development

ISSUE: RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION IN ACT PUBLIC SCHOOLS**Talking points:****Why is it important?**

- A focus on respectful relationships is important because gender inequality and gender-based violence continue to have a profound effect on outcomes for Australians.
- Respectful Relationships Education is a school based approach to primary prevention of Domestic and Family Violence. It aims to develop skills and attitudes early, that will stop Domestic and Family Violence from happening in the future.
- *Respectful Relationships Education (RRE)* programs have had increased attention in recent years, with the link between this curriculum area and primary prevention of gender based violence becoming more widely understood. In all Australian jurisdictions, Education departments are working on developing resources and implementing curriculum in this area.
- The Directorate's approach has been informed by the work of Our Watch, an independent, not for profit organisation established under the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022* (the National Plan). Our Watch works closely with Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS).

Implementation in ACT public schools

- Respectful Relationships Education is most effective when used as part of a whole school approach, which involves students experiencing the "key messages" in many different ways across the curriculum and in different areas of the school and community. This should involve the whole school community, including students, staff and the wider school community in the process of cultural change.
- At the universal level (all students), schools teach RRE through the Australian Curriculum (AC) supported by Social and Emotional approaches and specific RRE resources.
- This is supported through the Directorate's Safe and Supportive Schools Policy (2016), requiring all Canberra public schools to deliver Social and Emotional

Learning programs, and the requirement for all ACT public schools to implement the AC.

- Schools are able to choose programs and resources that suit their particular context and school community. All ACT public schools have access to the online QLD Curriculum to Classroom (C2C), the 'Student Wellbeing Hub' hosted by the Commonwealth and resources from Our Watch, Tasmanian and Victorian Departments of Education to support implementation of RRE.
- Staff can access a range of quality RRE resources through the Directorate's intranet Respectful Relationships Education site. A corresponding external webpage has also recently been published, linked to the Directorate's website.
- The Directorate supports schools to access a range of professional learning including the White Ribbon Breaking the Silence Schools program and the Love Bites Program (NAPCAN) provided by senior psychologists.
- In the ACT some non-government organisations, such as the YWCA, Police Citizens and Youth Club, Canberra Rape Crisis Centre and Menslink offer training to schools in this area. The YWCA's program involves a cost to schools which covers a license to train other school staff and a resource kit. There are also a range of commercial programs available to schools.

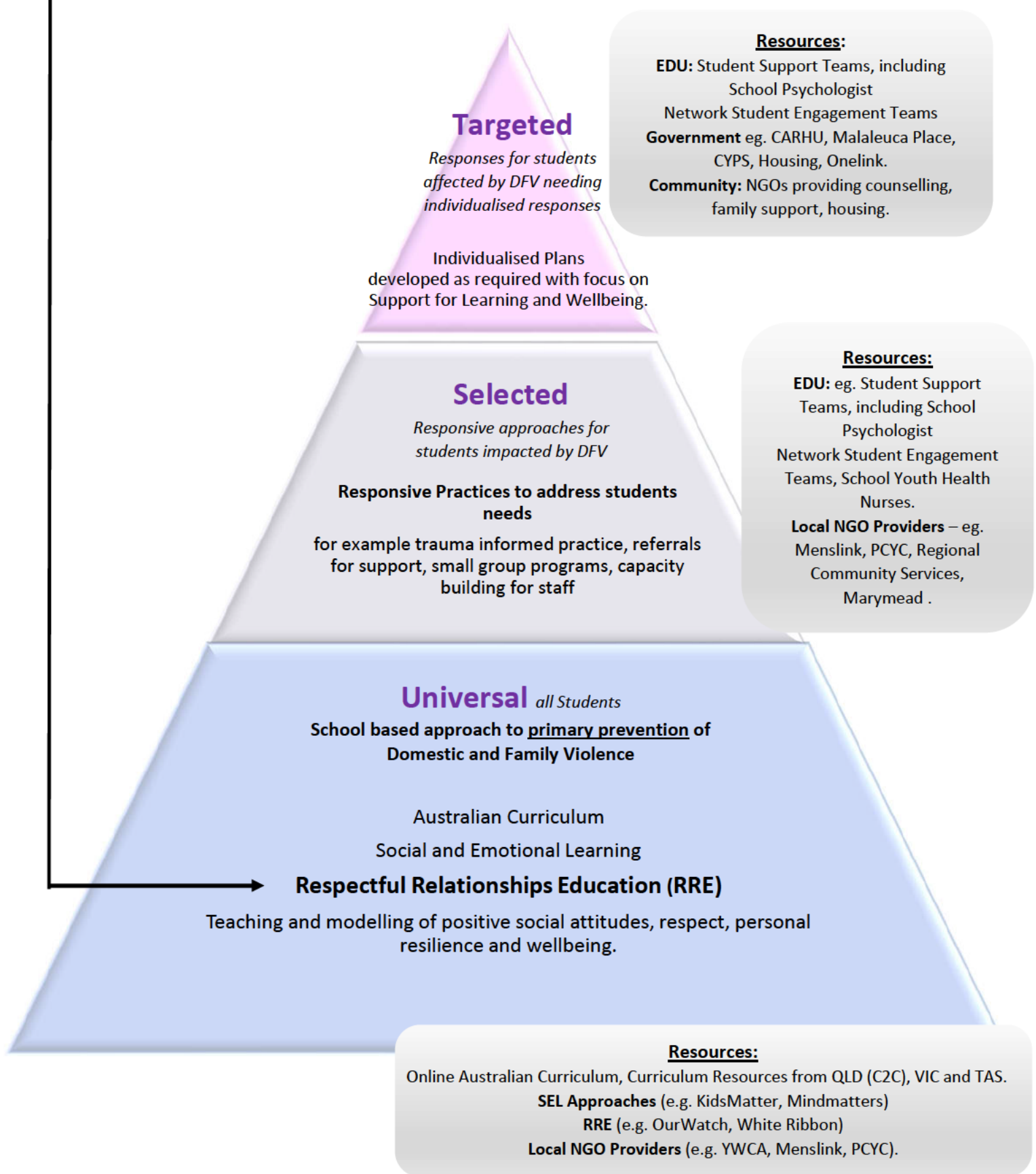
Who are we working with?

- The Directorate is working with Our Watch to progress Respectful Relationships Education. Our Watch is also working with other education jurisdictions (Victoria and Queensland) to help meet commitments under the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022.
- The ACT Education Directorate contributes to an Australian Government led working group in this area and is also a member of the Our Watch National Respectful Relationships Education Expert Group which is meeting in September. The Directorate attended workshops provided by Our Watch on 5 and 6 March 2018.
- The Directorate has promoted the *White Ribbon Australia, Breaking the Silence Schools Program* to ACT Public Schools, which White Ribbon has provided free of charge. 24 ACT schools have engaged with this program which takes a whole school approach, 15 have finished the program, six finishing in 2018. A new cohort of schools commenced in August, 2018.
- Directorate staff attended the National Respectful Relationships Education Expert Group meeting in September 2018. The meeting provided the ACT opportunities to share and discuss implementation of Respectful Relationships Education and new curriculum resources at a national level.

How do we support individual families/students experiencing family violence?

- In addition to the primary prevention approach of RRE, the Directorate provides a range of supports for individual students/families who have/are experiencing family violence.
- This includes support from the Network Student Engagement teams (NSET) and links to Government and NGO providers.

Where Respectful Relationships Education fits in Education’s Domestic and Family Violence Plan



Key Information

- The YWCA Canberra has, on a number of occasions, spoken out in public forums and in the media commenting that the Education Directorate needs to do more in the area of Respectful Relationships Education.
- On 17 May, 2018 YWCA released their *Leading the Change: Gender Equality Report*, which provided recommendations based on YWCA's assessment of the ACT Government's progress on gender equality. The Education Directorate met with the YWCA on 11 May and provided a follow-up letter, providing information about their approach to RRE and clarified inaccuracies in the draft report.
- The YWCA has been promoting its *Respect Ed* suite of training and resources to ACT schools. There is a cost to schools to access training. The Directorate has supported the advertisement of the *Respect Ed* to schools.
- Ms Caroline LeCouteur is interested in primary prevention programs for sexual violence and assault issues, including the topic of negotiating consent. Programs delivered by Sexual Health and Family Planning (SHFPACT) and Canberra Rape Crisis Centre address consent. The Line, an Our Watch campaign which has been promoted to ACT Public schools, also provides resources to schools on this issue.

Background Information

The ACT Education Directorate's (EDU) response to Family Violence aligns with both Australian and ACT government priorities and recognises the important role the education system plays as a setting for *primary prevention*.

Young people benefit from education programs which assist them to recognise and question gender norms, and to critically examine the potentially negative or limiting impacts they may have. Research indicates that education programs that work on building positive gender relationships must commence from an early age, as children are well aware of gender norms and make efforts to fit within gendered expectations by the time they are in kindergarten.¹

Continuing **social and emotional learning programs (SEL)** in schools to enhance the skills of children and young people to engage in respectful relationships forms part of the current Parliamentary Agreement between ACT Labor and ACT Greens. During the 2015 and 2016 the Directorate made SEL grants available to schools (up to \$5000/school). 51 schools applied for a grant to assist implementation of SEL approaches in their school.

SEL forms a strong foundation for teaching about positive gender relationships and is a logical starting point from which to engage in more explicit work with students around gender norms, gender identity and respectful relationships. SEL is the process through which students acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to:

- understand and manage their emotions
- understand and show empathy for others
- establish and maintain positive respectful relationships
- set and achieve positive goals make responsible decisions.

¹ Victorian Department of Education and Training (2016). Resilience, Rights & Respectful Relationships: Teaching For Social and Emotional Learning and Respectful Relationships. Melbourne. Available at www.education.vic.gov.au/respectrel

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Portfolio/s Education & Early Childhood Development

**ISSUE: PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICE (BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE)
POLICY**

Talking points:

- Students may bring their own IT device to school to assist with their learning.
- Implementing the policy is a school-based decision made in consultation with their parent community, and implementation varies between school communities.
- The program is complementary to the financial support provided by the Directorate to supply devices for students to use at school.
- In recognition of the cost impact to families of providing a device the ACT government implemented the Technology Enabled Learning initiative. This will ensure every students in years 7 – 12 irrespective of family circumstances, will have an equal opportunity to access technology so that they can learn wherever they are and use technology whenever they need it.

Key Information

Personal Electronic Device (Bring Your Own Device) Policy

- The policy states that “students may bring personal electronic devices (PEDs) to school to support their learning”. The Policy ensures that no student (or family) is required to bring their own device to school.
- The schools who have adopted the policy have included many parent information forums and opportunities for students to demonstrate their use of our new ICT services and capabilities, including demonstrating ‘Google Apps for Education’ on personal wireless devices to the school’s parent community.
- The policy has provided schools with an opportunity to strengthen their school-parent partnerships.
- The policy was developed over a period of two years with extensive consultation with school staff, parents and interested community organisations including the “ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations”.
- The Directorate has ensured that the policy aligns with the Australian Curriculum, which requires students to understand how to independently select and operate various devices that they can personalise to assist in their learning.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 12/09/2018

Cleared by: Director

Contact Officer Name: Kristen Foster

Lead Directorate: Education

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- The policy provides schools with a localised framework to partner with their parent community to enable students to safely and securely connect to the Directorate's high speed Wi-Fi network with their own personal device.
- The policy provides recommendations to schools of what should be addressed as part of the parent/community consultation including equity, diversity of devices, privacy, security and other local community needs.

Funding

- Directorate schools are allocated a share of \$1.5 million funding each year to provide reliable student access to ICT, including devices. This is to ensure that all students can access ICT technology when required as part of their learning. Currently, the number of school-purchased devices provides a ratio of one device for every three students.
- Schools use the funding allocation to select the mix of devices best suited to their local needs, with low cost options such as Google Chrome books at \$350 per device being an increasingly popular choice for schools.
- With \$1.5m in annual funding available over the last four years this would equate to approximately 4200 new devices every year in our schools, depending upon local school choice.
- An election commitment was made by the ACT Government in the October 2016 election (ACT Labor Party Election Commitment – Supporting Parents and Students, September 2016) to give every public high school and college student in the ACT a high quality and up-to-date device, issued progressively to year 7 and year 11 student from January 2018 for four years. Further details are in the "Election Commitment – technology Enabled Learning" Question Time Brief.

Background Information

- The implementation of the Personal Electronic Device (BYOD) program at some schools has raised the question of ICT equity for students and cost to parents.
- Our schools emphasise the use of ICT and the development of ICT skills to ensure that their students can develop their capacity to analyse information, solve problems and communicate in a highly digital society.