



# ParentACTion

*The parent voice on public education*

**Term 3, 2013**

ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations

## Federal Election 2013

Australians will be heading to the polls on Saturday 7 September 2013 to decide who will lead our country for the next three years.

A well-resourced education system for **Australia's children is essential to the future** of our country. Raising the level of education for all children has been shown to have flow on effects; increasing our GDP and the future earning capacity of students whilst leading to lower unemployment levels and reliance on welfare.

If you are looking to have your vote count for public education, there are three main policy areas that should be considered.

### The Funding Question

Council has been advocating for the implementation of the Gonski report recommendations; in particular a funding model based on student needs. The Gonski review highlighted that Australia has been investing far too little in public schools and that the funding model lacked a logical and consistent approach to school funding. If the Gonski model is implemented correctly, this would mean that more money would flow to support students with learning difficulties, disability, low socio-economic status, English as an additional language and indigenous heritage.

The panel recommended that all funds should be based on student need and an additional \$6.5b in the first year be dedicated to education. Due to the lobbying efforts of parents and schools, all major parties are now committing to a new

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# From the President



Viv Pearce

Hello and welcome to another edition of Parent ACTION. Council has been busy with many issues this winter, and we have much to share with you.

Gonski (funding based on need) is still an educational hot topic, especially with the approaching federal election. Take a look at the report on election promises by Tim Lawley on the cover and page 4 to see how Gonski has influenced major party policy. In the lead up to the federal election, executive members and myself have been busy meeting with local candidates to put forward Council's views on educational issues.

Council exhausted the 2,000 copies of our **Disability Resource Booklet 'Who Can Help?'** Executive has authorized a reprint of the brochure, which should be available to parents later this term.

The final report from the Learning Difficulties Taskforce, in which I participated, was released earlier this month. After initially considering that this would be yet another talk fest, born from lobbying during an election, I have been proved wrong. Due to the hard work of all Taskforce members and the Chair Irene Lind the results have been worthwhile. Council totally supports the recommendations of the Taskforce, they have also been welcomed and supported by the Minister and the Education and Training Directorate (ETD). With the new funding formula under Gonski, there should be money to implement these recommendations over the coming years; see article on page 6.

As you may have seen in the media, Council has been vocal regarding the approval process for new private school applications. Council would like to see a change in the legislation and the implementation procedures. At the present, it is virtually impossible to deny an application for a new private school. Council holds the view that a new school should only be approved under a proper planning process and when the establishment of the school is an efficient use of

public money. More than half of the funding for non-government schools in the ACT comes from the taxpayer. We have submitted our concerns to the Minister and plan to follow this issue very closely. A short summary is available on page 5.

**On 12 August 2013 I joined the Council's Disability Working Group meeting.** There was some great discussion surrounding Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), clarifying the role of Disability Education Coordinators (DECOs), communication between schools and families, adequate training for teachers, unmet therapy **needs and updating Council's policy for children** who need help to access their education. We will be inviting a representative from the ACT Education and Training directorate to attend a Council General Meeting to discuss many of these issues with parents.

I attended a successful meeting with the Gifted and Talented Working Group on 16 August 2013. We generated some good ideas in this area and finalized the revised Council policy to be put before the annual policy conference.

Hugh Boulter and myself have been working closely with the Canteen Taskforce, which has seen significant progress since our last edition. Read the article on page 3 for more information.

The next Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) National Conference is scheduled for October 2013 in Canberra. You can read the draft conference program on page 8. Day 1 has a focus on parent engagement in education, and I highly recommend P&Cs consider sending a representative to conference.

Council is trialing the use of social media to contact our delegates. I strongly recommend following Council on Twitter (@ACTParentVoice) or liking our page on Facebook to stay up to date with Council activities.

We held our annual policy conference on Tuesday 27 August 2013. Thank you to all those who attended. A summary of new and amended policies is on page 11. ●

# ACT School Canteens: update

Prior to the ACT 2012 election, the then Education Minister Chris Burke established a High Level Ministerial Canteen Taskforce to prepare a report on how best to achieve the goals of improving and developing ACT public school canteens. Current Education Minister Joy Burch has continued to support the work of the Taskforce.

In the 2012 ACT election, lobbying by the P&C Council resulted in a promise from the Labor government to provide up to \$500,000 in funding to improve and develop ACT public school canteens.

Following our participation in the Taskforce (via representatives Hugh Boulter and Vivienne Pearce) and Council's 2013/14 budget submission, \$200,000 has been assigned in the current budget to improve the operability and viability of P&C managed canteens.

**The Council's recommendations to the Taskforce** included purchasing an online ordering system, with a point of sale facility appropriate for all public schools and colleges that have so far not purchased a system. Council also undertook to apply for registration with the NSWBuy procurement agency, which will provide discounted products and services to P&C Canteens.

The Council also recommended to the Taskforce that there be standard contracts between P&Cs and schools for provision of school canteen services, an update of the Education and Training Directorate (ETD) School Canteen policy and standard contracts for school canteens out sourced to commercial operators.

A report from the Taskforce has not yet been received by the Minister.

## Progress to date

The following has been achieved to date:

1. A number of online ordering systems have been considered and Flexischools was selected as the most cost effective and well managed system. It is also already in use in a number of schools.

2. **Council's application for registration with NSWBuy** has been resubmitted following **necessary changes to the Council's constitution** to meet NSWBuy criteria. Approval is expected within 4 weeks.
3. Council has made comments on the standard contracts and revised ETD policy **to protect P&C's interests. For example,** schools are to offer their P&Cs first opportunity to provide canteen services and profits are not to be automatically handed each month to the school.
4. A formal proposal from Flexischools has been received and reviewed by P&C Council. A meeting with Flexischools and the P&C Council has been held and a contract is being negotiated. Flexischools will appoint a project manager as part of the project contract.
5. This will include a delivery timetable and training program for school canteen managers and volunteers.

## Further action required and timeline

Further progress is now waiting on a report from **the Taskforce, and the Minister's consideration** of the recommendations.

Following this, a Deed of Grant between ETD and Council must be signed before the funds can be made available to Council.

As soon as the funds are received, Council will sign the contract with Flexischools and implementation of the delivery plan will commence.

The training program should commence before the end of the year. In the meantime there will be a briefing session for the Council Canteen Working Group to which all P&Cs will be invited.

Installation of the Flexischools systems should be completed by 1 February 2013.

**Council's office can be contacted to answer any questions regarding canteens. Another update will be made available before the end of the year. ●**

# Federal election 2013 continued

*Continued from cover*

funding model. However there is significant divergence between the parties on this policy area and implementation of these recommendations.

## *Labor*

Labor has stated it will implement the funding model, but have not committed the full funding that Gonski recommended. They have proposed a 6 year implementation plan, and the vast majority of funding comes in the final two years. As this is more than four years away, this funding does not currently appear in the budget forward estimates. Under the 2013/14 to 2016/17 forward estimates, education funding has been budgeted with an additional \$3b over the four years. **Council supports Labor's commitment to the new funding model, but is disappointed that Labor's plan falls short of the total increase of funding recommended in the Gonski report.**

## *Coalition*

The Coalition have not given strong support to Gonski in the past. Initially, the Coalition announced that they would not honour any new funding model unless a majority of states signed up. Just as the election was called, the Coalition changed their commitment and will now honour the next four years of funding estimates.

Council is also disappointed with this announcement, as their commitment is only to the funding envelope currently budgeted and not to the underlying recommendations; namely a funding model based on student needs. Although the Coalition have promised to follow the reforms for the next four years, without a commitment to the Gonski principles, doubt remains over the future of Gonski under a Coalition government.

## *Greens*

The Greens have supported the Gonski funding model, and have signified their commitment by promising an extra \$2b on top of the forward estimates supported by Labor and the Coalition, an additional \$5b over four years. Out of the three education funding policies, Council is of **the view that the Green's is the closest to the funding model envisioned under Gonski. However, it still falls short of Gonski's final recommendation of a minimum \$6.5b in the first year and ongoing funding thereafter.**

## School Autonomy

The Federal Government has been rolling out their *Better Schools* plan, to which there are five core areas of change. One of these areas is *Empowered School Leadership* in which principals and the school board are given greater autonomy in decision making. This includes budgetary and staffing decisions.

Council has been raising serious concerns about the increase in school autonomy as the evidence which suggests an increase in school autonomy will increase student performance is dubious.

Under the various schemes, principals and school boards are being given increased responsibilities without the appropriate training, oversight or support. This can lead to instances where the number of experienced or specialist teachers in the school are reduced to allow for a reduction in staffing costs to fund other needs of the school.

## *Labor*

Labor will continue with the *Better Schools* plan, including their commitment to *Empowered School Leadership*.

## *Coalition*

The Coalition have encouraged the adoption of *Independent Public Schools* based on a model that is currently being implemented in Western Australia. This model is similar to the US charter school system that actively encourages government schools to gain independence from the education department. This model sees even more autonomy given to schools than under the current Labor *Better Schools* and *Empowered School Leadership* plans.

## *Greens*

During the last political term, the Greens have questioned the research surrounding the effectiveness of school autonomy. The Greens have indicated that if there is no evidence to support a school autonomy approach, then it should not be implemented. However, the Greens have remained relatively silent on this issue during the election campaigns.

## National Testing

Currently, national testing exists in the form of

a standardised test known as the *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy* (NAPLAN) for students in grades three, five, seven and nine.

National standardised testing can serve a useful purpose. It allows the government to target additional support and resources to schools in need. It also gives parents a useful indication of **their child's improvement. However, Council has concerns about other consequences of standardised testing; such as the use of NAPLAN data in judging school performance in league tables and an increased focus on the results of the tests in place of a more rounded education.**

**There is divergence in each party's future plan for standardised national testing.**

### *Labor*

Labor has indicated that they want to expand national testing to include science.

### *Coalition*

The Coalition have previously indicated that standardised testing should be completed every year by students in grades three to ten; a major increase in the number of standardised tests each student would complete.

### *Greens*

The Greens initiated a senate inquiry into the unintended consequences of NAPLAN earlier this year. The inquiry was opened for public consultation, but was put on hold when Parliament was suspended for the election. No further comment regarding standardised testing has been provided by the Greens, who are awaiting the results of this review.●

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## Data mining

Data mining in its various forms involves **the collection of a user's information**, browsing history, or other statistical data to identify various patterns. The issue of data mining in the learning environment is a difficult and controversial one.

Despite the prevalence of data mining and concerns about the uses to which it might be put, many parents are unaware that it occurs in the classroom. The Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO), the national body that represents Council on federal issues, conducted a study into parent awareness of data mining. ACSSO found that over half of parents knew nothing about the issue of data mining **with only 1 in 17 having heard a 'great deal'** about it.

Because of this lack of awareness and the issues that are raised by data mining Council recently passed a policy on data mining at our annual policy conference. A central platform of this **policy was the need to raise parents' awareness of data mining.** Whilst there are several negative aspects associated with data mining, there are benefits to proper collection and use of **student's data for educational purposes.**

The biggest question is always, *what is the data used for?* Data that is collected can be used for a variety of purposes. In the classroom, data mining can, and is used, to help identify schools

and students who are in need of additional support.

However, as the learning environment increasingly shifts to an online platform companies are gaining greater access to **student's data. This information can then be used to direct targeted advertising to the student in the classroom as they browse the internet.**

**In ACSSO's study 71% of parents surveyed expressed serious concerns over online companies abilities to monitor and track students' web browsing habits and use the results to target students with online advertising in school.**

Council recently raised concerns over the potential of data mining in schools with the Education and Training Directorate (ETD). It is **Council's position that parents should be informed when schools are going to use programs that collect and use students' data for advertising purposes.**

Whilst it is impossible to completely remove any possibility of negative applications of data mining from the learning environment, ETD should take steps to minimise the use of data **mining and to maximise its safety.**●

# Taskforce on Students with Learning Difficulties

In August 2012, the then ACT Education Minister, Chris Burke established a taskforce to consider education and support for ACT students with learning difficulties. Minister Joy Burch has continued to be supportive of the Taskforce and their findings.

Council President Vivienne Pearce represented ACT parents on the Taskforce by Vivienne Pearce said *“Initially I thought the taskforce might be a lot of talk but no action on the massive problem of students with learning difficulties in our schools.*

*“I was wrong. The hard work of the Taskforce, in particular Chair Irene Lind, has lead to some sound recommendations on how to improve the outcomes for these students. The Taskforce’s recommendations are fully supported by myself, parents and Council.*

*“The support of the Education Minister Joy Burch and Education and Training Directorate has meant there is a real chance for real improvement in this area. The worry has always been, that no money had been allocated to the recommendations from this taskforce. However, the advent of Gonski funding for additional needs students means there should be.”*

## Terms of Reference

The aim of the Taskforce was to consider how to improve the assessment of, and support to students in ACT public schools with learning difficulties. This included, but was not limited to students effected by language disorders, comprehension and processing disorders, dyslexia related issues and significant difficulties in general numeracy and literacy.

The taskforce took the role of an advisory body, established to provide the Minister for Education and Training with recommendations.

## Membership

In September 2012 the taskforce was formed, and lead by experienced school principal Irene Lind. The taskforce was comprised of government and community members with

either personal or professional experience with learning difficulties.

## Taskforce process

The taskforce met repeatedly across the last twelve months. Consultation was held with the Directorate, specialist groups, teachers, students, parents and carers in early 2013.

## Issues identified

During consultation and discussion, several key issues were identified by the taskforce.

### *Inconsistent terminology*

There is significant debate over the definition of Learning Difficulties around the world. Australia does not currently have a consistent definition of learning difficulties. Learning difficulties is an all-inclusive label that can be used to refer to students who experience difficulties for a variety of reasons.

The lack of a common understanding or consistent terminology added complexity to the work of the taskforce. Until the terminology issue can be resolved, there will be implications for support available to students.

### *Data collection*

Inconsistent terminology has resulted in inconsistent data, making it very difficult to identify how many students are currently effected by learning difficulties. National data in 2000 estimated that between 10-30% of students were effected by learning difficulties.

### *Wide range of learning difficulties*

Learning difficulties are multi-faceted and multidimensional. There is no information readily available on the entire range of individual learning difficulties; areas such as dyslexia had greater resources, information and research available than several other learning difficulties.

### *Scientific Research*

Research into the brain and learning is a rapidly progressing area. Any new knowledge in this area needs to be incorporated into the ongoing support for students with learning difficulties.

## Final Report

In June 2013, the taskforce presented current ACT Education Minister Joy Burch with a final report.

The final report recommended that a whole Directorate approach to address education and support for students with learning difficulties be employed. The report presented the Minister and department with three key messages

### *Consistent Systemic Approach*

There needs to be a consistent and systemic approach to maximise the specific learning outcomes of students with learning difficulties.

To achieve a consistent systemic approach, there needs to be a high-level of understanding across the Directorate as a whole.

### *Building Staff Capacity*

A strategy must be developed to build the capacity of staff to meet the needs of students with learning difficulties. A comprehensive professional learning pathway is required to increase the levels of specialist knowledge amongst schools and the Directorate.

The taskforce proposed targets for completion of training and extra support for teachers. Classification and extra support for all learning assistants was also encouraged.

### *Partnerships with Family*

Families and educational institutions need to

work in partnership to address learning difficulties; this requires constant communication and support between families, schools and the Directorate.

The taskforce recommended that multiple communication mechanisms be engaged by the Directorate to communicate with and support families; such as flowcharts of support, booklets, and online information. Partnerships are also encouraged with therapists and other professionals to improve the outcomes of students.

### Response from ACT Minister for Education and Training

On 16 August 2013, ACT Education and Training Directorate published a media release **responding to the Taskforce's final report**.

ACT Minister for Education and Training Joy Burch said the Government had agreed to all the recommendations from the Taskforce.

**"I have asked the Education and Training Directorate to action the recommendations, with a focus on reviewing and simplifying the information available to the community and teachers on the assessment of—and support of—children with learning difficulties," Ms Burch said.**

In their response document, the Directorate has stated it supports the fourteen strategies under **the three key recommendations**. ●

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# Private school approval process

In the last edition of ParentACTion, Council discussed the issues surrounding the process in which the ACT Education Minister grants in-principal approval to new private schools.

This issue came to light after Education Minister Joy Burch gave in-principal approval to three new private schools looking to establish campuses in north Canberra. At the heart of **Council's concerns were the viability of existing schools, lack of community demand for new schools, the funding model for new campuses and a lack of transparency or opportunity for public consultation.**

Since the last edition, the ACT Education

Minister Joy Burch has initiated a review of arrangements for approving and registering new private schools. Council welcomes a review into the process, but calls on the Minister to conduct a transparent review and commit to making findings publicly available.

Other small changes were offered by the Minister, including electronic notification of approval and online publication of decisions.

Council President Vivienne Pearce said **'Ultimately, we believe the approval of new schools is a planning issue which uses public money, and it should not be dealt with differently to other planning issues which are far more open and accountable'**. ●

# ACSSO National Conference 2013

## Education for our Future - A Nation's Investment

The 2013 Australian Council for State School Organisations (ACSSO) Conference will be held on 17-18 October 2012 at the Hedley Beare Centre for Teaching and Learning, Stirling.

The conference will bring together participants from schools, parent organisations, universities and **community agencies to engage in national and international research and share 'what works' in improving student outcomes in different contexts.**

ACT parents and carers are encouraged to attend. The conference program is organised around the four themes; student well-being and engagement, parent and community engagement, economic effects and principal autonomy.

**Participants will be engaged in strategic professional learning. Key goals include showcasing 'what works' in improving learning outcomes and student engagement, engaging with current research, examining parent and community partnerships that support student learning, interacting with educational leaders and establishing collegial networks.**

More information available on Council's website or by contacting the office.

## Key note speakers

### George Otereo

George Otereo is an educational consultant who was born and raised in New Mexico. He has worked as a teacher, educator, international consultant, social entrepreneur and author.

George and his wife operate the Centre for Relational Learning based in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He has worked for many years in Australia and the U.K. as well as the U.S. His work with schools and community leaders in transforming schools is an outgrowth of his twenty years of work creating and directing a multinational community learning centre in Taos, New Mexico, attended by over 50,000 people. His approach utilised dance, play, dreaming, games, storytelling and an open inquiry process that builds community and stimulates learning and leadership.

Through his work new ways for schools and communities to secure equity, inclusion and social justice have emerged leading to transformations in relationships. His work in transforming schools is done one at a time clarifying the issues and problems within the context of their communities.

### Susi Steigler-Peters

Susi Steigler-Peters has responsibility for the Education vertical within Telstra. Her national role reaches schools, TAFEs, universities and key education agencies, including those with responsibility for curriculum, teacher accreditation, regulation, credentialing and content creation in Australia.

**Susi's key areas of focus are the provision of thoughtful leadership, solution innovation, industry insight and strategic engagement with C-levels and ministers. She is focused on collaborating with education leaders to help them arrive at their preferred future.**

Susi is a champion of the link between education **and the nation's economy. In 2010 Susi established and is current chair of the Educational Roundtable Advisory Group, which represents the K to 12 sector, TAFEs, universities and more. The Group meets regularly to confront the challenges associated with the changing Australian education landscape. Particular attention has been given to the business issues of student engagement, teacher professional learning, the role of assessment and the use of technology to transform the learning environment.**

# Conference program

Day 1 Thursday 17 October 2013

- 8.30am Registration
- 9.00am Welcome to Country
- 9.10am Welcome from ACSSO President, Peter Garrigan
- 9.20am Student performance
- 9.45am Official opening
- 10.00am Key note speaker George Otereo will be discussing parental engagement in education
- 11.00am Morning tea
- 11.30am Concurrent workshops on parental engagement
- 1.00pm Lunch
- 1.45pm Ryan Macpherson from NSW Department of Education and Communities will discuss the use of Google Apps in education
- 2.45pm Discussion on Data Mining through Google Apps and Gmail
- 4.00pm Presentation from Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations on Parent Engagement for Better Schools

Day 2 Friday 18 October 2013

- 8.30am Registration
- 9.00am Student performance
- 9.20am Review of day 1
- 9.30am Quality Teaching for Personalised Learning: Leveraging Technology for Exceptional Results, presented by key note speaker Susi Steigler Peters.
- 10.15am Schools, complaints and the NSW Ombudsman, presented by Sarah Unwin and Frances Smyth
- 11.00am Morning tea
- 11.30am Concurrent workshops on wellbeing
- 1.00pm Lunch
- 1.45pm Intercultural education for Asia capacity; why and how? Presented by Dr Eeqbal Hassim, Senior Manager, Australian Curriculum & Research
- 2.30pm Presentation by Kate Waterhouse from Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
- 3.30pm Panel discussion
- 4.15pm Conference closing and final remarks by ACSSO President, Peter Garrigan
- 4.30pm **President's drinks**

*Conference schedule is still in draft form and subject to change*

# Sustainable school news

ACT Sustainable Cities Award to Hawker School

Council would like to congratulate Hawker School on recently receiving the 2013 ACT Sustainable Cities Award.

Hawker School was commended for the sustainable efforts and environmental achievements it made in the delivery of its 2013 School Fete. The award was under the category of Resource Recovery and Litter Prevention.

The school was represented at the award ceremony by Gillian Treloar and Angela Byron from the P&C Fete Committee, Recycling rangers Justin Byron, Jasmine Ellis, Bridget McGrath and Nadia Gustin as well as environment program manager Jennifer Macdonald.

Host your own Sustainable Fete

Hawker has shared some of their secrets to their successful sustainable fete.

- **Primary School students were 'Recycle Rangers' and assisted with appropriate recycling on the day**
- An environmental stall promoting community recycling.
- School grown vegetables and eggs from the school chickens.
- Student decorated seed packets.
- Sustainable themed activities; such as guess the giant vegetable weight
- A craft stall reusing donated materials
- Encourage visitors to bring their own reusable bags
- Clearly marked recycling stations (many recycling bins can be hired for the day)
- Recycling fruit pulp from the juice stall into the school compost bins

- Reusable fete signage
- A drink bottle refilling station
- Recyclable or biodegradable cups and plates at food stalls
- Brochures from NOWaste, Greening Australia and AuSSI Schools
- Get assistance from ACT NOWaste and ACTSmart—they can provide support and advice on services that are available to your fete.

Parliament of Youth on Sustainability: Is your school participating?

The Centenary 2020 Vision Parliament of Youth on Sustainability will be culmination of work in schools on the SEE-Change 2020 Vision **sustainability project, 'Imagining a Sustainable Canberra'**.

Representative ACT students from Kindergarten to year 12 will gather at the Australian National University to take part in the Parliament where they will present, discuss **and vote on ideas for reducing Canberra's** greenhouse gas emissions and making Canberra a more sustainable city.

Parliament of Youth will run over two days at the Australian National University:

*8.45am to 3.00pm Saturday 2 November 2013, Manning Clark Centre*

*9.00am to 2.20pm Wednesday 6 November 2013, Llewellyn Hall*

By the end of the two day Parliament, the representative students will have decided on the best 24 proposals over eight topic areas for inclusion in a final parliamentary paper, or White Paper, for presentation to the ACT Chief Minister.

More information on the Parliament of Youth on Sustainability is available by contacting the Centenary 2020 Vision project team on 6231 2452 or [2020vision@see-change.org.au](mailto:2020vision@see-change.org.au). ●

# Annual policy conference

Council held its annual policy conference **on 27 August 2013. Council's policy** conference is an opportunity for P&Cs to make their voices heard and inform Council of their views on a range of education related issues.

The policy developed through the policy conference informs and guides Council throughout the year.

The following is a summary of new policies approved and changes made to existing Council policy.

## Social Media Policy

**Council's social media policy covers the use of social media by Council Executive and staff.**

Social media is broadly defined to include a wide variety of online communications such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, forums and more.

The new policy encourages the use of these media platforms to communicate with any interested parties, and also outlines what is considered inappropriate use and the appropriate response.

Member organisations are encouraged to develop their own social media policies and are welcome **to use Council's policy as a model for this.**

## Data Mining Policy

Council is concerned about the potential negative consequences of data mining and targeted advertising on students using third party web services (TPWS).

However, it is important to balance this with the potential for enhanced learning using varied technology. This policy outlines steps Council believes will reduce risk, such as educating parents about the potential issues with data mining, seeking consent before initiating programs and providing alternative programs.

Council is also planning to work with ETD and the Government to establish a list of appropriate TPWS and the creation of new programs within the educational system.

## Students Absent from School for Lengthy Periods Policy

A growing number of students undergo lengthy absences from school, for a variety of reasons **including prolonged illness, carers' duties or mental health issues.**

These students suffer significant disadvantage academically, due to class time lost. They can also suffer social isolation as they manage the condition preventing school attendance.

Council believes ETD should establish a system-wide policy based on best practice to manage the varied needs of these students.

## Gifted and Talented Policy

Council recognises the presence of gifted and talented students and believes that policy should support and encourage these students to reach their full potential.

This requires identification of students with gifts and talents, and the implementation of varied programs and flexibility with school arrangements to enable them to pursue their gifts and talents.

Council supports a system wide policy on Gifted and Talented students which includes transparency of communication to parents about services available.

Copies of the updated policies will be available **on Council's website shortly.**

Thanks to everyone who submitted ideas, worked on policies, or attended on the night. Your input is important in clarifying and **improving Council's policies and thus our ability to represent the views of our community.** ●

# Events

- 27 Aug Annual Policy Conference & Council General Meeting  
7.00pm - 9.30pm  
Council's primary policy development event. All members are welcome. A short general meeting will follow.  
*Multipurpose Room, Hedley Beare Centre for Teaching and Learning 51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling.*
- 24 Sep Council Hot Topics / General Meeting  
7.00pm - 9.30pm  
*Multipurpose Room, Hedley Beare Centre for Teaching and Learning 51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling.*
- 30 Sep Council office closes for term break
- 14 Oct Council office opens for term 4
- 17-18 Oct ACCSO National Conference, hosted by Council opens  
*Hedley Beare Centre for Teaching and Learning 51 Fremantle Drive Stirling*
- 22 Oct Council General Meeting  
7.00pm - 9.30pm  
*Multipurpose Room, Hedley Beare Centre for Teaching and Learning 51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling.*
- 26 Nov Annual General Meeting & Council General Meeting  
7.00pm - 9.30pm  
*Multipurpose Room, Hedley Beare Centre for Teaching and Learning 51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling.*
- 20 Dec Council office closes for end of year break
- 30 Jan Council office opens for 2014

# About us

ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations is the representative body for Parent & Citizen associations in the ACT.

We represent over 60,000 parents and carers in 85 ACT public schools.

## About our magazine

*ParentAction* is a free journal published four times a year. Distribution: 1550 copies - the ACT Legislative Assembly, ACT Government School Boards and P&Cs, public education organisations and interstate parent associations.

Contributions, advertising and feedback are always being sought. Contributions can be emailed directly to the Editor, Jena Dobie, at [jdobie@actparents.org.au](mailto:jdobie@actparents.org.au). Views expressed in this journal are not necessarily those of the ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations.

# Our Executive

President:	Viv Pearce
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Assist. Secretary:	Amanda Bichard
Treasurer:	Hugh Boulter
Committee:	Graeme Evans, Donna Reed, Joan Kellett, Mark O'Neill, Karen McLaughlin, Amadu Barrie, Amanda Falconer & Denis O'Dea.

## Life Members

Grant Battersby, Pam Cahir, Trevor Cobbold, Joan Kellett, Ian Morgan, Richard Scherer, Graeme Evans.

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Closed public holidays and school holidays