



ACT Council of
Parents & Citizens
Associations

The parent voice on public education

NOTES FROM THE ACT COUNCIL OF P&C ASSOCIATIONS

HOT TOPICS/GENERAL MEETING OF 26 March 19 at Stirling

Attendance 22: Including 20 delegates from schools, T Sanders EO & Marina Spurgin ELO.

1. Presentation by Mark Huxley, Executive Director of School Improvement on Directors of School Improvement – their role and responsibilities and how they may assist schools/parents/P&Cs. There are 5 Directors of School Improvement (DSI) and 4 are allocated 22 schools each in ACT regions. Each DSI has a support team. The DSIs are responsible for:

- Oversight of school operations and performance
- School Review, Planning and improvement outcomes
- Operational effectiveness and health
- Broker of supports and services from across the Directorate to meet schools' needs.
- Partner in complaints, issues and incident resolution

Supporting P&Cs:

- Your school principal is the first call for any issues or requests for assistance. They will engage with the DSI as required.
- If the school response inadequate call Community Liaison -Family and Carers hotline. Phone:(02) 6205 5429 or use the Online Form at Access Canberra.
- DSIs will be involved depending upon the nature of the issue.

If you are not satisfied with this process or wish to remain anonymous, contact the P&C Council who will liaise on your behalf. Mark's presentation is attached to this email.

2. Minister meeting on 25 June 19 – Matters raised with the Minister and her advisor included the recent ACT budget, the violence in schools workshop program, school bus issues, CCTV in schools, early childhood education, our Reconciliation Action Plan and Valuing Volunteers project. The Minister was keen to hear our input on all these topics and advised she would further consider some of these and their implications. We noted the considerable effort by EDU in our joint hosting of the recent changing behaviours workshops and thanked Coralie McAlister and Leanne Ballard. Our own committee of Jane Koitka, and Veronica Elliott were also recognised (plus Kirsty McGovern-Hooley). Thanks were also given to all those who participated in the workshops.

3. Council's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) & how P&Cs can adopt it – Our RAP is awaiting final approval by Reconciliation Australia. Once received it will then be finalised and launched. It will be available for adoption by any member P&C that so wishes.

4. EDU supplied Chromebooks – Mark Huxley discussed the reasons for EDUs access and use policy for the Chromebooks provided to students. He noted that there was a trade-off between good access and useability for students, against the needs for security and safe access. EDU recognised that any access controls placed on the devices can eventually be overcome by some students. Generally, EDU believed the devices were being used appropriately. However, parents also needed to play their part in monitoring student use of the devices, particularly as the government (via EDU) should not be dictating the home use of the devices. Any parents with concerns about the use of the devices should contact their school IT co-ordinator for advice. Lyneham High School recommended a speaker they used to brief parents (for details contact the Council office).

5. Update on Recruiting Volunteers & P&C business model – Work on the Valuable Volunteers project was continuing with the presentation prepared by Jane Koitka being condensed and an action plan and timetable prepared. This includes briefing of all stakeholders including P&Cs and a major seminar on the proposals in mid-September.

6. Issues from P&C Associations

a. Risk management plans for P&C events - A sample risk management plan was provided at the meeting. It will be available on the website shortly. It resulted from questions by a P&C about the ratio of parents to students at a school disco conducted by the P&C. No such recommended figures were found. By following the risk management plan process such questions should be answered. Some P&Cs already use risk management plans of their own or school provided templates.

b. EDU cancellation of out-door education activities – EDU has advised principals that due to the death of a student in NSW, all outdoor activities such as canoeing and canyoning were temporarily stopped, while they do a review of the safety etc procedures for such activities.

c. Financial assistance by P&Cs for students selected for representative sport or other events interstate - Each P&C needs to look at its constitution and objectives to decide if such payments are allowed and if appropriate. The School Sports Council is establishing a fund to assist students in need of support to attend interstate events but this is not yet operational. They have offered their guidelines and criteria for applications to us – these will be sent to P&Cs when we receive them. Schools may choose to use their equity fund to assist students but this fund is primarily used for welfare type support.

d. Students using bikes after dark and bike security- Telopea and some other schools advised that the bike cages at their schools were not sufficient to accommodate all the students and staff/school bikes. P&Cs could fund additional cages but EDU is responsible for this matter. The increased use of cycling to school was positive and we may be able to find support from related Directorates for the cages issue. Students faced with cycling home from school after dusk need headlights for their bikes. It was generally felt that this was the parents' responsibility but support may again be found in other Directorates eg Transport Canberra, ACT Health. Office will investigate.

e. School buses – it was suggested that we use an online survey to obtain parent comments on the new bus timetable and routes. The office will investigate.

7. Next Meeting

6.45pm General Meeting 27 Aug 2019, HBCTL Freemantle Drive, Stirling

Important dates

P&C Constitution workshop – 7pm Thursday 30 July 19 at Stirling

P&C Audit workshop – 7pm Thursday 12 Sep 19 at Stirling