

## NOTES FROM THE ACT COUNCIL OF P&C ASSOCIATIONS HOT TOPICS/GENERAL MEETING OF 23 JUNE 2015

(Attended by 28 delegates)



*The parent voice in public education*

### **School traffic, parking and safety initiatives of ETD/TAMS**

David Jones (ETD) and Robyn Hawkins (TAMS) spoke about current initiatives to improve traffic safety around schools and encourage active travel to school.

- Better coordination of agencies involved – JACS (Justice and Community Services), ETD, ACT Health and TAMS/ACT Roads. David Jones is first contact point for schools and can then direct the specific issue to the right agency. This will help with frustrations of not knowing which agency to approach.
- Improving quality of information about traffic problems at each school and what has helped in the past so that this is not lost when staff change
- Active Streets Pilot is now operating in four primary schools: MacGregor, Mt Roger, Latham and Macquarie.
  - Consultants gathering information on current situation, including observing family routines, measuring number of pedestrians, students riding bikes and traffic volumes and speed (now)
  - Given identified issues in these schools, traffic initiatives/changes (see below) will be implemented (Term 3 and 4).
  - New measures will be taken to see if changes implemented have improved traffic safety and increased active travel (walking, riding) (final report on what worked best in Term 3, 2016)
  - This will show which traffic changes could then be useful at other schools
- Traffic initiatives/changes will be driven by 'Four E's':
  - Education of parents and students
  - Encouragement of parents and students to do the 'right thing' and what benefits can follow
  - Engineering solutions such as traffic islands, new signage, crossings, 30km/hr zones, road markings to signal school zone, walking routes marked on pathways
  - Enforcement – increasing parking checks, higher fines, and mobile speed cameras in school zones.
- Developing resources to help schools, such as:
  - 'How to' guide for 'kiss and drop' zones, including peer-help for principals from those who have already implemented successful programs
  - Maps of parking alternatives around each school (within 250m)
  - 'Part-way OK' walking maps for each school (drop/parking areas up to 1km away from which students walk the rest of the way)
  - Safety factsheets for schools to hand out to remind parents/kids of safe behaviours
- Currently 25 priority schools being looked at in detail: reviewing data/issues identified by school and parents, creating a report on how to approach these (4Es), and then working to implement these solutions.
- ACT Government recently launched Road Safety fund, from which schools can apply for grants to improve traffic (from July 1). Details on how to apply to follow.
- Parents are key and P&Cs have a role to play in encouraging safe behaviours. Upcoming Factsheets will help.

### **P&C Council sign up to the Grants Hub**

Following the two week free trial, we have now signed up with the Grants Hub and have access to their grants directory for the next 12 months. After that we will need to decide if it is worth the \$360 per year to renew continue access. Access for P&Cs to the site should be available using the ID and Password advised for the trial. If this fails please contact the Council office, as we may need to obtain a new password.

### **How is your school faring with digital learning technologies?**

Our Parent ACTION newsletter Term 2 issue discusses ETD's commitment to providing digital learning technologies and equipment to our schools. From discussion it became clear that many of the claims made in the article by ETD were not supported in some schools, while others were happy with the outcomes and services at their schools. Issues were mainly with inefficient wireless connections in schools, changes to browsers and operating systems making previous purchases of BYODs eg iPads by parents and P&Cs unsuitable. There was also a lack of communication from schools about the availability of free software downloads for student computers. Council to follow up with ETD and circulate more information for parents.

### **Development of new promotional resources for P&Cs**

The Council has allocated some funding to develop and produce new resources for the promotion of your P&C association and to encourage greater participation of parents/carers in P&C management and activities. In discussion, it was noted that some schools had families using different languages and it would be good to have resources in these languages. Also, some P&Cs had success with using volunteer registers and having P&C members speak at parent teacher nights. Facebook was seen as useful in getting parents and community members to attend activities. Generally, there is support for Council to produce a generic P&C promotional/recruitment brochure.

### **What type of events run by the school P&C are covered by the Council's P&C association insurance policies?**

The P&C Council negotiates a bulk buying scheme for our members P&Cs insurances. All events managed by the P&C either on school premises or elsewhere, are covered by the P&C association's insurance for public liability. Where the P&C has selected the additional personal injury insurance option, cover is also provided for minor accidents/injuries. The P&C Council expects all member P&Cs to be insured and incorporated as associations in the ACT. P&Cs that are not incorporated may still be insured under the P&C Council scheme but the insurers may take a harder line on any claims made on that P&Cs insurance, where the P&Cs liability is not limited by incorporation.

### **Outside the Square – empowering children with dyslexia in our schools DVD**

The P&C Council office has a copy of this excellent 3 x DVD set, which is available on loan to P&Cs and parents on request to Janelle in the Council office. It was also advised that the Council is preparing a submission to the Shaddock review of children with challenging behaviours and complex needs. P&Cs, parents and carers were invited to send any comments into the Council office for inclusion in our submission or make their own submissions direct to the review.

### **Possible improvement grants to P&C managed canteens**

A paper (attached) on the proposed use of the remaining canteen improvement grant funds was discussed and there was general agreement with the suggested expenditures and activities, which all aimed at improving the viability of P&C school canteens. The terms and conditions for the proposed grants to P&Cs were also discussed and agreed in principle. It was noted that the P&C Council School Canteens subcommittee would oversee these activities. At their next meeting on 29 July the terms and conditions of the grants to P&Cs and other funded projects would be finalised and applications for grants called as soon as possible. Successful grants would be paid out in September. P&Cs will be required to report on the grant's use and acquit funds received. Applicants will need to demonstrate in their application that the project will improve the viability of their canteen.

### **Other matters**

The President invited delegates to consider the two main roles of the P&C Council, which are the provision of services and support to P&C associations and also to lobby on behalf of public education in the ACT. He asked delegates to consider how the Council performed in these roles and if there were improvements or changes that we might make. It was noted that our strategic plan was due for review and renewal later in the year and any input from delegates would be useful for that review. He also invited delegates to consider joining the P&C Council executive committee where they could expand their knowledge and skills while contributing to the Council's work.

### **Minister's meeting report for 11 June 15**

The written report (attached) of this meeting was presented and discussed. It was highlighted that the Minister was now requiring non-government schools to meet the same statutory incident reporting requirements to which government schools are subject. This is a win for the P&C Council that has been lobbying for this since the last ACT government election.

### **Safe Schools Roundtable**

The President, John Haydon, attend a meeting of the Safe Schools Roundtable earlier this day and gave a brief report on its activities.

### **Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO)**

A written report (attached) on the recent ACSSO board meeting was presented. ACCSO is our national body. It was noted that ACSSO is going through a restructuring process, with a new constitution and board arrangements.

### **ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations**

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