



## Early learning rep: long-term benefit

Parents' early years at school are a critical point to get engaged. So we think every primary school should have an Early Learning Parent Representative. Marina Spurgin, Council's Early Learning Officer, talked to several reps to find out what the role involves and the benefits they see.

Early Learning Matters Week in July got us thinking about how important the parents of early learners are to P&Cs — and their future — and what role the P&C could play in their experience of school.

Duffy Primary P&C's preschool representative, Melissa Austen, notes that parents often have more time when their children are in the early years and are more involved in helping them to feel secure and confident at school.

"A lot of the preschool parents have more time to join in. They're enthusiastic and if we engage with parents then, they just fit the P&C into their everyday life, as they're scheduling," she says.

"When you send your child to preschool you're thinking about every single step because it's such a big change and a new environment — you just want to make sure that everything's okay so you get really involved. It's much easier too if you get involved to start with."

Parents and carers come into a new school community from a range of contexts and with varied community engagement experience. They often ask how they can connect with other parents prior to starting preschool or kindy, seeking opportunities for playdates so children can start school with a few friendships already forming. Orientation events are a good time to include some 'get to know you' exercises for parents or even, as Melissa mentioned, provide a link to a closed Facebook group just for those parents to connect.

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**Council has promotional materials and template role descriptions to help you find your P&C's Early Learning Parent Rep.**

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# From the President



**Alison Elliott**

It has been a very busy few months for Council, particularly with ongoing conversations with the Education Directorate around COVID-19 and planning for any potential

future lockdown again in the ACT.

Council has also seen an increase in approaches from the media, which highlights our growing presence and engagement within the ACT community.

## **COVID planning for ACT schools**

With the latest significant increase in COVID cases in NSW, and close proximity to the ACT, Council asked the Education Directorate to prepare the public school community, and help relieve increasing community anxiety. We requested information be provided around planning in the event we face another lockdown situation in the ACT, and what that would look like for students and parents, so that parents and carers can be prepared, particularly if they need to start discussions at work around working from home arrangements, or would need to take leave from work.

## **Early Learning**

Last month we enjoyed Early Learning Matters Week, organised by Early Childhood Australia. Council has been representing preschool parents since 2019 and we are encouraging P&Cs to formally include the role of Early Learning Representative among your association's committee roles, to give parents of early learners a voice, and a clear way into the P&C.

Early learning parents have told us they often feel too inexperienced to contribute to the school P&C. But research shows that parents

who become engaged with their school and P&C community in the early years, benefit from stronger networks for themselves and their children, have a stronger relationship with school staff, and a better understanding of the school's parent association throughout their child's education journey.

Council's Early Learning Committee supports early learning parent representatives with a dedicated early learning officer, webpage, annual transition-to-school parent forum, committee meetings and data. We gather feedback and summarise the issues impacting early learning communities. This information informs Council's early learning position and advocacy.

## **Traffic and parking issues**

We know some schools are still struggling to get school crossings and better traffic management plans in place. We are aware there is strict criteria around implementing desired changes, and that some schools failing to meet those criteria have unusual situations, and are seriously concerned about the safety of their students.

Council will be seeking further discussions with Transport Canberra, and the Minister, to help address these concerns.

## **Inclusion in schools**

Council is currently developing plans on how we can best advocate for inclusive education. Council is also raising concerns with the Education Directorate around school suspensions that involve students with disabilities. ●

# Early learning rep: long-term benefit

“So then if anyone wants to do a playdate before preschool year starts, they can organise that.”

“Preschool is the one grade,” Melissa notes, “where parents are allowed to drop their children at the door, they’re allowed to help hang up their bag, and often have more interaction with the teachers. Whereas you kind of step back a little bit in kindergarten and year one.”

“Our P&C is exploring ‘get to know you’ options, for example, where you can volunteer for an hour and make sandwiches to freeze for children that have forgotten their lunches.”

The Duffy preschool teacher facilitates communication to their parents so Melissa doesn’t have to worry about managing mailing lists, and the closed Facebook group is parent led.

“One parent set up the preschool Facebook page initially, and the preschool teachers tell new parents about the page,” Melissa explains.

All parent reps stressed the importance of providing a range of options, or levels of commitment, for parents.

“We tell potential volunteers that they don’t have to sign on to endless activities,” says Melissa. “We’ve been talking about the barriers to volunteering for the P&C. It’s thinking that if you do something you have to be there from the start to the finish... people feeling like they have to lock themselves in, like they’re letting people down. We’re working on a calendar of events so people can plan what they do and how much they sign up for.”

With early school years forming a significant foundation for growth and learning, it’s also the time of early education transitions, a time when parents may appreciate more support to connect with others, to interpret new information, and build their capacity to participate in their child’s education. Capacity gains in the early years – positively engaged, not overcommitted, approachable networks, respectful interactions and so on – can translate to long-term benefits for schools and families. While the context

changes, transitions occur again and again, through secondary schooling and life events. Building that capacity early on supports future challenges.

And that capacity needs to be built, not simply assumed. Dr Karen Mapp, Senior Lecturer on Education at Harvard, has dedicated 20 years of research to understanding partnerships among families and educators which support student achievement and school improvement. She notes that “the various stakeholders (families, school leaders and staff) have not had the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills, in other words, the capacity, to engage in effective partnerships.”

Kylie Kynaston, P&C volunteer at Mt Stromlo High School was previously a Chapman Primary P&C ‘class carer’. Kylie described the enduring nature of the class coordinators.

“One went right through [primary] with two children and now another is doing the role and has two children, they tend to stay in the role because they get momentum going,” she said.

“You need to get parents involved early and then they’ll keep going, there’s been a lot of Chapman P&C people go through to the P&C at Stromlo High School.”

Parent reps recommend engaging early but not overwhelming parents, having longer tenure for coordinating roles, and getting to know your early learning parents.

Alice Falkiner provides a strong voice for early learning parents. Vice President at Chapman primary, Alice has been a class carer and is also the preschool-P&C liaison.

“We always try and have at least one social event for the preschool, there’s also the information night... we’ve also organised a dinner picnic on school grounds at around five-ish.” ●

*Marina works with EL parent reps and schools to support information exchange and develop resources for community building. She provides advice to early learning reps or your P&C.*

# Council: Connecting you!

**At Council, we put our members — ACT parent associations — at the centre of everything we do. We connect you with the tools and skills you need to lead your P&C; connect you, through our representative work, with decision-makers in government; and connect you with each other!**

As the peak body for P&Cs, we're here to help you run your association well. We hope to provide the resources needed to stop each of our 92 member associations reinvent the wheel! We also voice your views to the Education Directorate and ACT Government.

At the beginning of July, we sent out invoices for our membership fees to P&C treasurers, for payment by the end of August. Our fee structure will be up for discussion at our next General Meeting (August 24). If you have comments or concerns, we'd love to see you there.

As you are looking at the invoice, you might be wondering – how does your P&C benefit from your Council membership? Well, read on!

## **Help running your P&C**

We have extensive information, advice and tips for P&Cs available on our website, covering everything from running good meetings to licensing your raffle, from collaborating with the school and principal, to promoting your P&C. Plus there are checklists to keep you on track.

*“Your To Do check-list was wonderful for me this year.”*

We also have a range of templates for you to pick up and customise so that you don't have to invent your own. There are pictures and brochures to promote your P&C, sample hand-over notes, templates for meeting minutes, canteen contracts and COVID-safe plans.

*“I just wanted to thank you for the handover note templates in your recent newsletter. I will be handing over my Secretary role next year and this will save me time and effort trying to think about how to do it.”*

Your membership also entitles your P&C volunteers to our free training courses. Each year,

*“It is great to have someone to call for added support and advice.”*

– P&C volunteer

these focus on areas of greatest concerns to you—our members. For example, this year we've run training on growing your P&C, getting grants, employing staff and more!

*“The grants workshop you held last year was both informative and inspirational. Since then I've been pleased to be able secure about \$35,000 worth of grants for my son's high school. So thanks for your role in that!”*

We also offer advice, assistance and answers to your enquiries over the phone or by email. If you are finding the P&C hard going, or just have a quick question, do contact us. We also offer site visits and can attend your P&C meeting if needed.

*“It has been a comfort knowing that I had the Council there if I needed advice. I really appreciate all Council have done for me personally and for the support that you give to P&Cs.”*

## **Sharing expertise**

We don't have all the answers, and there's an incredible wealth of expertise, skills and experience among our members, so we help share that collective wisdom around. You can join our P&C Leaders Group on Facebook (a closed group) and put your questions to P&Cs across the



ACT or come to our meetings and talk to others in a similar position to yourself.

*“Many thanks to the Council for organising the monthly general meetings — great opportunity to meet people from other schools and discuss issues relevant to many.”*

You can also join one of our groups on special topics (such as canteens, uniform shops or early learning) to ask the nitty gritty, or read articles sharing great work by P&Cs across Canberra.

*“The Early Learning meetings are informative and it is good to know there's support for EL activities.”*

### **Insurance**

Our group insurance scheme provides insurance for your parent association at reduced cost, and assistance in making sure you have the cover you need. During 2020 we also assisted P&Cs who would otherwise have been unable to pay their insurance due to financial hardship.

### **Keeping you informed**

To help keep you in the know, this magazine arrives each term. In addition, our fortnightly ebuletin, *Council Communicator*, distils must-know, timely, information for your committee — from rapidly changing COVID regulations to current grant opportunities or your reporting requirements to keep your association operating legally.

We also have guest speakers at our meetings who present information of interest to P&Cs, parents and carers. Recently, we've heard about school funding, improvements in the Education Directorate's complaints handling processes, and school capacity and infrastructure planning.

### **The parent voice**

Problem at your school? Can you see ways in which schooling could be improved? We voice your concerns and represent the views of parents and carers to the Education Directorate and

Minister through formal submissions to enquiries, via representative positions on many committees, and through regular meetings with the Minister and senior Directorate staff.

*“Thank you... for putting together this submission to government. [It] clearly presents the issues that have been raised at Council meetings and discussions.”*

Here are just some of the issues which Council raised with the Minister for Education and senior Education Directorate staff on behalf of parents and our members in the past 12 months alone:

- ACT school capacity and enrolments
- complaints management processes
- hazardous materials in ACT schools and informing parents
- a range of school infrastructure concerns
- continuing remote learning for vulnerable families and students with disabilities
- safe-guarding school libraries and providing more school librarians
- school psychologist shortages and problems with accessing them; wellbeing concerns particularly during COVID
- relationships and sex education in schools
- Early Childhood Strategy and transitions
- Future of Education implementation
- changes to school board elections
- implementation of individual learning plans
- inclusive education and suspensions
- a framework for better parent engagement
- fostering positive school-P&C relations
- making P&Cs more visible in Directorate and school communications
- composite and split student classes; teacher shortages
- making voluntary contributions and bookpacks family friendly
- how the trial of school breakfasts will impact P&Cs
- canteen maintenance and waste needs
- financial literacy in schools. ●

# ACT CDS school resources now available

Are you — or do you know — an educator who is passionate about recycling? You'll love these new curriculum-linked resources!

The ACT Container Deposit Scheme (ACT CDS) was launched by the ACT Government in 2018. Participants receive a 10 cent refund for every eligible drink container they return through one of the many return points in Canberra, ensuring containers are recycled and not littered or in landfill.

In addition to great environmental outcomes, the ACT CDS has also become a mainstay of fundraising for numerous schools, P&C associations, charities and community groups. Find out more at [www.actcds.com.au](http://www.actcds.com.au).

## Students begin a lifelong journey in sustainability at Bonython Primary

At Bonython Primary School, a key aspect of learning is focused on the natural world and sustainability. So when the ACT CDS launched, it came at a good time for the school with the scheme quickly becoming part of the school's sustainability and recycling approach. Year five and six student leaders took on the responsibility of developing and implementing a strategy for collecting and returning eligible drink containers, receiving 10 cents for each. The students worked out how to collect and store containers, and educated their peers about using the new container bins.



*Students at Bonython Primary School have used the CDS in their learning*

The ACT CDS has been incorporated into the classroom too. Students have looked at how many containers have been returned, graphed the amount of waste saved from landfill and the amount of money raised through using the scheme. In addition, students have visited the ACT Recycling Discovery Hub to learn more about the recycling process, with the site also hosting professional learning opportunities for Bonython staff.

Funds raised through the ACT CDS have been used to support initiatives such as the Year six graduation activities as well as the school's garden and sustainability work.

"Sustainability is an ongoing journey and education is key," says Bonython Primary School Deputy Principal, Marc Warwick.

More stories about ACT CDS recycling heroes are available at [www.actcds.com.au/news](http://www.actcds.com.au/news).

## ACT CDS preschool & primary resources

Cool Australia and the ACT CDS have developed a suite of curriculum-linked resources for ACT teachers that supports school participation in the



scheme and enables teachers to discuss the environmental benefits of the ACT CDS as part of their sustainability lessons.

The ACT CDS school resources provide practical ways to engage students on sustainability and recycling from Early Learning through to Year Six.

Find out more and download our free resources at [www.actcds.com.au/get-your-school-involved](http://www.actcds.com.au/get-your-school-involved).



### Recycling Discovery Hub ‘Come and Collect Resources’

A ‘Come and Collect Resources’ event will be held at the Recycling Discovery Hub from 4pm-5pm on Wednesday 18 August.

This FREE event is an opportunity for teachers, principals and environmental educators to collect a sample of the ACT CDS teaching resources on sustainability and recycling for Early Learning through to Year six.

Book your spot now by visiting:  
[www.eventbrite.com.au/e/recycling-discovery-hub-come-and-collect-new-teaching-resources-tickets-165231346405](http://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/recycling-discovery-hub-come-and-collect-new-teaching-resources-tickets-165231346405)

For general enquiries call 6280 8538 or email [contact@actcds.com.au](mailto:contact@actcds.com.au).

*Paid Content*

# Reconciliation prize

*continued from back page*

that everyone learns. They are great conversation starters!”

“It was done in such a beautiful way,” Emma continued, “I was moved by your efforts — I know that most of you are volunteers.”

Former Council President, Kirsty McGovern-Hooley, called the award “wonderful encouragement” and reflected on Council’s work on our Reconciliation Plan.

“It’s been an interesting journey for us. We had to look inwards — at Council, at what we were doing — and ask: How can we be more welcoming, learn more, and understand better? It’s been about changing.”

The black and white water birds are a long way from their Kakadu home, but will be a welcome addition to Council events and meetings. Murnubbarr are found in abundance in the wetlands of Kakadu and western Arnhem Land. They are a sustainably hunted and enjoyed Manme (bush food). They are known to fly long distances, particularly in the wet season.

With their encouragement, we hope to ‘go the distance’ and complete our first RAP this year. •

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## Canteen training

### Food allergies

The National Allergy Strategy has released free, quick, online training. *All About Allergens* helps staff and volunteers working in school canteens understand more about food allergies and how to keep kids safe. It covers managing allergies, reading labels and avoiding cross contamination. Find it at [www.foodallergytraining.org.au](http://www.foodallergytraining.org.au).

### Food safety supervisor course

All canteens need someone to have completed this training so they can prevent and recognise food safety hazards. The \$250 course is on Mon 30 Aug: [www.actnss.org/home/whats-on](http://www.actnss.org/home/whats-on). •



# Why I volunteer

## Meet the volunteers that make Council tick!

We're so grateful to all the people who give up their time to keep P&Cs and Council thriving. But why do they do it? We asked another wonderful volunteer.

### Paul Buckley – Council Vice-President

I joined Council because I wanted to help make sure that kids in public schools got the best possible education. I've got 12 kids. They – and myself – have all benefited greatly from what is a really good public education system. So I wanted to give back something. My involvement at Council is an extra couple of hours on top of my P&C involvement but it has let me see at the ACT level what is happening and to contribute in a small way. I feel like part of a bigger force that is able to affect change in the Directorate for better education.

I also wanted to ensure that funding arrangements for public schools weren't degraded.

When I was on the P&C at Telopea Park School, we funded a half-million dollar playground



*Paul and family*

because what the kids were playing on hadn't been replaced since the 1960s! I was worried that the pendulum was swinging the other way, away from public schools. So I became the Council Rep to ACSSO, to get the best outcome for public schools at the federal level. It has opened my eyes to the disparity of funding available to public and private schools. ●

ACT Council of P&C Associations and the ACT Education Directorate

## transition to school parent forum

ONLINE  
THU 16 SEP  
7-8 PM

preparation for  
starting preschool or  
kindy in 2022

Register via Council website



## To Do: Term 3

### Essential tasks for parent associations this term:

- Pay insurance
- Pay Council membership fees



# The Parent Voice

**Council has used several formal opportunities this year to present to government a schools wish list which represents parents, carers and P&Cs.**

As a truly grass-roots organisation, Council is constantly guided by the consensus of our members and the discussions held at our General Meetings. From speaking to parents, and their representatives from each school P&C, we co-create a set of policies and focus issues which we then voice to decision makers in government.

Formal submissions are one important avenue for us to have your say. As in previous years, we submitted a thorough proposal for schools funding ahead of ACT's annual budget. We were also pleased to see a Parliamentary Inquiry into school infrastructure and prepared a submission on that subject. Here, we've summarised our main points and recommendations – a great parent wish-list for ACT public schools!

## The wish list

- More new schools – we know the ACT Government has several new schools planned in new suburbs, but additional primary schools are needed in the Inner North, central Woden and Belconnen Town Centre, as well as a second college for Gungahlin.
- Changes to planning processes are needed so that schools are considered at the beginning of town planning.
- Libraries and other specialist spaces in primary schools (such as drama or arts spaces) must be removed from school capacity calculations so that they are preserved and not converted to classrooms as school enrolments grow.
- After School Care services and capacity must be considered in school enrolment and growth plans.
- A more consistent and coordinated approach to infrastructure upgrades, overseen by property-management professionals is needed, and a school modernisation fund should be established. More funding should be made available for removing hazardous materials, installing heating and cooling, and



***A school modernisation fund would mean more schools could benefit from renovations like Belconnen High's.***

for managing traffic.

- Investments are needed to provide ramps, lifts, sensory spaces and quiet and calm spaces for full inclusion.
- A strategy is needed to protect schools from vandalism, including CCTV and fencing (where supported by the school community).
- Increases are needed for in-school real-time wellbeing and allied health supports.
- A comprehensive evidenced-based relationships and sex education framework must be embedded in public schools.
- A wholistic inclusive education framework to guide best practice across public schools needs to be developed, and all educational professionals in public schools (school leaders, teachers and learning support assistants) must have access to quality inclusive education professional development.
- Funding must be ear-marked for a qualified teacher librarian in every school, with priority to schools with lower socio-economic areas.
- Continued support is needed for a range of strategies to reduce bullying and violence.

You can see all of the details in the submissions themselves, available on our website.

Lets hope our wishes come true! ●

# At our P&C... tackling plastic

**As the ACT's single-use-plastics ban comes into effect for a small number of plastic items, some P&Cs are going above and beyond the ban — reducing the plastics they use and pressuring manufacturers to follow suit.**

In 2019, Aranda Primary School student Yassine Andrews wrote a letter to the P&C's canteen committee, looking through the school's canteen menu and noting which items created plastic waste. Since then, the volunteer-run committee has been on quite a journey, reducing waste at the canteen by changing the menu, seeking alternative suppliers, and investigating reusable — instead of disposable — food and drink containers.

“Yassine was determined and not easily put off,” Yassine's mum, Janaline Oh, told us. “Eventually, I was asked to join the canteen committee to help out!”

Merisha Percival, who chairs the canteen committee, says that some swaps were easy. But other top sellers were not so easy to replace — like juice boxes. Pies were also tricky — Mrs Macs are one of the few pie manufacturers which meet the ACT's tight Nutrition Guidelines, but they are plastic wrapped.

By this time, the school had got involved.

“The school signed up to Plastic Oceans Australasia,” Janaline explained. “This really helped because it has engaged the school. We got a group of eight Year five students from the school's environment team — our G-Force team — to help.” G-Force was established several years ago by Aranda's French teacher, Myriam Davies, to encourage Year five and six students to engage hands-on in sustainability at school.

The Plastic Oceans team wrote to manufacturers



***Hands on! - the waste audit at Aranda Primary School***

of some of the canteen's popular items, asking them to drop their plastic packaging. And they got at least one piece of good news. Bulla, who make the very popular frozen yoghurt sold by the canteen (but which currently has a plastic lid) wrote back saying that they were “in the process of converting the Frozen Yogurt packaging from plastic to paperboard”.

“Plastic Oceans also suggested we do a waste audit and this was so important,” Janaline said. “We found that 100% of the hard plastic and 75% of the soft plastic in the school waste was from the canteen. Knowing that, and sharing the results with the school community, has created a lot of support for what we are doing.”

The next step was to find out more about what parents wanted.

“We did a survey of parents — and students. We wanted to find out what people did or didn't like about the canteen, what changes they wanted to see, and whether they would be prepared to pay more for less waste. Nearly two-thirds told us they would pay at least 5% more to get rid of the plastic from an item.”

“We discussed all this at a P&C meeting,”

# Got questions?

All ACT public school parent associations are members of the ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations. We are here to help your organisation run well.

## Contact us with your P&C-related questions.

(02) 6241 5759  
contact@actparents.org.au  
www.actparents.org.au

Maitland House  
100 Maitland Street  
Hackett ACT 2602

9.30am - 2.30pm Monday to Friday.  
Closed public holidays and school holidays.

Merisha recalls. “We talked about our aims. We were clear about our goal – the canteen is not about making money; it’s to provide affordable food for kids. If it starts to make a profit, we will reduce prices.”

Armed with this clear aim and the survey results, the committee approached local businesses such as Dobinsons and Husk to see if they could source plastic-free pies.

“The nutrition guidelines have made it very hard,” says Janaline. “But we are still trying!”

“We are also investigating reusable cutlery and containers for serving our foods. We have installed a commercial dishwasher to pave the way for this transition, but there are a lot of considerations to take into account. One of our major concerns is the need to manage the workload of our canteen staff.”

Several other P&C-run canteens are also leading the way, working steadily and deliberately to reduce waste. For example, Latham and Ainslie Primary schools students return reusable plates and cutlery to the canteen after use, rather than throwing disposable items in the bin.

In many cases, it has gone hand-in-hand with home-making foods to serve on the reusables. These, in turn, are often healthier than pre-packaged item.

“We’re working on getting the kids into the habit of returning all the reusables, which is a challenge,” Bonnie Roppola, canteen manager at Latham, told us. “Our Year six Waste Warriors help, and we are considering a raffle ticket system to encourage them to come back.”

Latham and Ainslie will share their journeys towards reusables at the next meeting of Council’s Canteen Subcommittee on September 8. How it fits within the Canteen Manager’s time, and potential funding sources for related costs will also be discussed. ●

## About us

### The parent voice on public education

The ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations is the peak body for public school parent associations. We bring together delegates from Canberra’s public schools to represent the views of parents to government and the media.

### About our magazine

ParentACTion is our free journal. It’s available online and hardcopies are sent to all ACT public school parent associations and school boards, ACT Education decision makers, public education organisations, the media and interstate parent associations.

Contributions, advertising and feedback are always welcome. Contact the Editor, Janelle Kennard, at [jkennard@actparents.org.au](mailto:jkennard@actparents.org.au).

*Views expressed in this journal are not necessarily those of Council. Authorised by Terry L Sanders for the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations.*

## Our people

### Executive

President: Alison Elliott  
Vice Presidents: Paul Buckley  
Kirsty McGovern-Hooley  
Secretary: Cecilia Shlegel  
Treasurer: David Pollard  
Committee: Sharon Ding, Vivienne Pearce  
Jayne Trustum, Norma Yap,  
Siaan Ansori.

### Life members

Grant Battersby, Pam Cahir, Trevor Cobbold,  
Ian Morgan, Richard Scherer, Vivienne Pearce

### Office staff

Executive Officer: Terry Sanders  
Policy Officer: Veronica Elliott  
Communications Officer: Janelle Kennard  
Early Learning Officer: Marina Spurgin  
Executive Assistant: Melissa Lee

*Council acknowledges that we live, learn and work on the traditional lands of the Ngunnawal people.  
We pay respect to elders past, present, and future.*



## Dates to remember

<b>24 Aug</b>	<b>Council General Meeting</b> 7.00pm - 9.30pm, via Zoom	<b>14 Oct</b>	<b>Early Learning Committee Meeting</b> 7.30pm - 9.30pm, via Zoom
<b>16 Sept</b>	<b>Transition to School Forum</b> Online 7.00pm - 8.00pm (see p. 8)	<b>21 Oct</b>	<b>Financial review training</b> Free member training
<b>20 Sept- 3 Oct</b>	<b>Council office closed (term break)</b>	<b>24 Oct</b>	<b>Council Policy Conference &amp; General Meeting</b> 7.00pm - 9.30pm, via Zoom

## Council wins reconciliation prize

Being awarded the ACT Council of Social Service's Award for Ingenuity in Reconciliation is "wonderful encouragement" for Council.

Murnubbarr karrolka – flying magpie geese – now adorn our Council office in a vivid and colourful hanging created by Dora Diaguma, artist with Bábbarra Designs. The artwork was presented to Council in recognition of Council's reconciliation efforts.

As part of National Reconciliation Week, the ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS) invited local community-sector workplaces to share the ways in which they were taking action on reconciliation.

We let them know about the work Council has been doing towards our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and they were impressed, awarding us the ACTCOSS CEO Award for Ingenuity in Reconciliation. In selecting Council for the award, ACTCOSS CEO, Emma Campbell, was particularly impressed with the NAIDOC Week



**ACTCOSS CEO Emma Campbell presents Dora's artwork to members of Council's RAP committee (left to right) Bonnie Rappola, Vivienne Pearce, Crystal Cox and Jane Koitka (Jayne Trustum behind the camera!).**

colouring competition which Council ran last year.

When presenting the prize to Council's volunteer RAP committee (who like to be known as RAPPers!) Emma said how impressed she was with the knowledge that ACT's young people already have about aboriginal cultures and histories.

"But," she said, "it is efforts like your colouring competition which help enable kids to tell these stories, to share them with their parents and bring the information that they have home so

*Continued on page 7*

