

ACT Council of P&C Associations Inc

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To: All P&C Delegates, P&C Presidents & Secretaries

Report on P&C Council General Meeting 27 February 2018

This report is issued after Council meetings to assist delegates in reporting back to their P&C associations and to inform parents generally about the activities of P&C Council.

- **Effective P&C workshop 6.30pm Thurs 5 April 18 at HBCTL Stirling**
 - **P&C Treasurers' & Insurance workshop 6.30pm Thurs 12 Apr at HBCTL Stirling**
 - **P&C constitution workshop 7pm Thursday 10 May at Stirling**
- 2. Presentation by Rod Bray A/g Executive Director Business Services Division and Robert Gotts Director Planning & Analytics from EDU – “New school & Infrastructure Planning for the next 5 years”.** They explained how the forecasting and analysis of school enrolments and capacity are calculated and also advised the following:
- a. Planning extends out 10 years and they are working on a population of half a million.
 - b. The shift to public schools in ACT is happening faster than in other states/territories.
 - c. Another 18,000 children are expected in the ACT over the next 10 years.
 - d. The impact of the light rail is being considered on effected schools.
 - e. Many out of area enrolments are due to parents wanting schools closer to their work places.
 - f. EDU works with principals to forecast their enrolments and capacity issues.
 - g. Demountables and redefining school spaces can be used to address capacity issues.
 - h. EDU's analysis is confirmed by the ANU Demography School.
 - i. New schools are planned for: Taylor 2019 p-6, East Gungahlin 2022 P-10, Denman Prospect 2021 P-10. Others may be considered for the new suburbs of Whitlam, Ginindery and the CSIRO area in Belconnen.

Parent choice is still possible subject to school capacity for out of area enrolments. NSW students do not have a choice of school in the ACT. EDU believes that the My School website has limited influence on school selection. Parents would appreciate more information from principals after their enrolment/capacity discussions with EDU.

It was agreed that the P&C Council office will facilitate meetings for any network of schools that would like to jointly discuss facilities issues – just contact the office to arrange.

Following consultation with principals, P&C Council and others, EDU decided a formal/legal Yr 10 certificate was no longer required but that it was still necessary to recognize those passing from Year 10. EDU will provide schools with an unnumbered, non-legal certificate, examples of which have been sent to schools. Students can still obtain a record of academic achievement.

- 3. Should students be banned from having mobile phones in class** - Council supports a prohibition on students using their mobile phones in class to text/call other than in an emergency.
- 4. The roll out of the Google Chrome devices in schools** – some schools had delays of 3 to 4 weeks but generally the roll out to students has been effectively handled by EDU and the schools.
- 5. Violence in schools** - Council will host a parent forum on violence in schools to explore new ways of resolving these problems.

6. Issues from P&C Associations

School Boards

Effectiveness of parent representatives on school boards depends on the individual and their willingness to ask questions and pursue issues. Many school boards appear very insular with no relationship to their P&C or school community.

The main focus of many school boards is approving the school budget, with little or no discussion of policy, strategy, curriculum etc. Budget discussion is at a very high level and board members are being told what the schools are doing rather than being consulted ie rubber stamp or a tokenistic role. EDU training for school board members perpetuates this as it focuses only on the finances.

Some principals are very secretive and board members are told that they are not allowed to share information discussed in board meetings, making it difficult for them to consult with their parent communities. There are some notable exceptions to the above with Gold Creek & Bonner specifically mentioned. Gold Creek holds a full day of strategy setting to which the P&C president is invited.

Poor or nonexistent communication between the elected board members & the P&C, is often managed by principals providing the board report at P&C meetings.

Board members are given little time to investigate matters in depth, leading to doubts about the quality of decision making. The role of the school board parent representatives is not clear to many people.

Communication by School Principals

Some principals communicate well with their P&Cs while other schools are not so fortunate.

Security

Delegates suggested that CCTV in schools should cover parking areas. Both for vehicle security, student/parent safety and to capture any car park confrontations.

Contacts and Networks

Upon request the Council office will facilitate P&C networks sharing good practice & learnings via online forums, Facebook, sharing contacts.

School size

Most parents believe smaller schools provide better administration & student outcomes. However, smaller schools generally can't offer the range of programs that the larger schools can provide.

NEXT MEETING - The next General Meeting is also a Hot Topics meeting and will be on 27 Mar 18 at Stirling.