



Our reconciliation commitment

While launching our Reconciliation Action Plan, Council invited all member organisations to join us on our journey of understanding, connection and respect.

At the end of October, Council celebrated the launch of our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The evening began with Violet Sheridan's heartfelt Welcome to Country and well wishes for Council's plan. Then Education Minister Yvette Berry officially launched our RAP.

A highlight of the evening was hearing first hand about excellent programs run in some of our schools that bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to the fore. Belconnen High Principal David McCarthy outlined their amazing culture and language courses and electives, Greg Terrell shared Bonython Primary's inspiring enquiry unit encompassing art and Country, and staff from Kingsford Smith School outlined a range of initiatives from Preschool to Year 10.

What is our RAP all about? It outlines the series of practical actions that we will be taking as an organisation over the next 12 months to build stronger relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and enhance our understanding and respect of their cultures, histories, knowledge and rights.

"The Plan is a clear commitment to recognise and value the rich cultures, work, teachings and spiritual connection with the land of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples," said Council President, Kirsty McGovern-Hooley.

"We are embarking on a journey to become more culturally aware, curious and respectful, and to

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Aunt Violet Sheridan peruses Council's RAP with Jo Chivers, Chairperson of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, at the launch.
You can read our RAP on our website.

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From the President



Kirsty McGovern-Hooley

Several ACT Government reports released this month focus on violence and bullying in schools. The reports of both the *Parliamentary Inquiry into the management and minimisation of bullying and violence in schools* and the *Schools Education Advisory Committee Report* echo the outcomes of our own *Building Safe and Strong Communities for Learning* project.

All reports acknowledge that some students and families have experienced truly harrowing and traumatic incidents of violence and bullying, and that every incident is of concern to the government and treated seriously. They also recognise that these incidents are not frequent or common in our schools.

Council knows many improvements have been made since the *Schools for All Report* in 2015, however member feedback, and the parent and student experiences noted in the reports, highlight how inconsistent improvement has been across our school system. The reports are very important in helping us identify key 'levers' that will make a difference, and will inform Council's advocacy efforts with ACT Education and the community.

Key themes and directions are consistent across all of this work. We need the following actions:

- **Improve school culture with Positive Behaviour For Learning (PBL)** in every school, including certainty of a timeline for implementing the framework, sufficient resourcing to ensure fidelity to core principles, and professional learning for teachers.
- **Improve capability to support students with complex needs** including social and emotional learning to support childhood trauma, behaviour management and violence, recruitment of psychologists who can work outside standard school hours, social/youth workers in every school, and specialist staff training in childhood anxiety and trauma.
- **Strengthen systems and processes supporting students with complex needs** including simpler policies and processes, publishing updated specific policies

(eg. Suspension), facilitating transfers outside of the PEA system where needed, supporting/enforcing Personal Protection Orders.

- **Use emerging data and reporting tools to identify/analyse issues** so appropriate interventions and support can be provided to schools, staff and students, including a way for parents and students to report incidents.
- **Improve communication** with parents and the community by using 'plain English' to discuss incidents, reviewing the complaints handling process, being clearer on policy, process and reporting, and providing data to Boards and P&Cs on climate and incidents.

From this work I've learnt the constructive role the P&C can play in building a safe school community. Supporting schools with PBL, holding parent information sessions, promoting mental health and student wellbeing and building social capital with community events all contribute to building a safe and inclusive school community. We encourage open discussion with your principal about how your P&C can support the school to manage bullying and violence.

Our RAP

You can read more about our new Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan on the adjacent pages, but I'd like acknowledge and thank those who assisted our RAP development:

- *Council's reconciliation working group - Jane Koitka, Vivienne Pearce, Bonnie Roppola and Crystal Cox* for their volunteer efforts and commitment. After taking on training and learning, they have used that knowledge to challenge Council's thinking, ideas and beliefs
- *ACT Education Directorate* for their ongoing support and for sharing learning opportunities and training courses with parents, especially *Patrick Chapman* for his help and patience in the face of many questions and *Angela Burroughs* for her timely advice and guidance
- *Reconciliation Australia*, especially *Sarojini Samy* - a mine of information & understanding
- *Belconnen High, Bonython Primary and Kingsford Smith Schools* for sharing with us their own insights, journeys and programs. •

Our reconciliation commitment

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listen to and learn from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and communities.”

We are delighted that Reconciliation Australia has endorsed our first RAP. “As a member of the RAP community, the ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations joins over 1,000 dedicated corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have formally committed to reconciliation... turning good intentions into positive actions, helping to build higher trust, lower prejudice, and increase pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures,” stated Karen Mundine, CEO of Reconciliation Australia.

Council’s commitment to creating and implementing a RAP began, Kirsty told the launch audience, when several Council representatives met with ACT Audit Office staff who were examining the effectiveness of ACT schools’ engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. When we were asked how Council and P&Cs engaged with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families we realised, with regret, that it was an area we had neglected.

So last year Council volunteers undertook an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Competence Course facilitated by ACT Education Directorate. They found it informative and enlightening. After debriefing a Council Executive Meeting it was agreed to follow the movement of reconciliation and promote positive change to bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other members of the ACT school community closer together by developing our own RAP.

“We value and promote education as being the greatest gift of all,” Kirsty said. “We want all families to feel welcome and participate as active members in their school and school parent associations. We want to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are heard and contribute to school decision making.”

“We want all parents to value and foster a greater respect and understanding of our First Peoples. We have a lot to learn and a lot to reflect on.”

“An important part of our RAP is educating ourselves, and we hope our member parent



Artworks created by Bonython Primary students in one of the in-school programs showcased at the launch.

organisations will walk with us and make our P&Cs, and our schools, more welcoming and understanding places.”

“A number of schools have already started on this journey — some have a RAP or are developing one. I encourage all P&Cs to get behind their schools, to help them attain their goals, build special spaces to increase understanding of culture, organise celebrations of special occasions, and raise funds to support initiatives.”

Whether or not your school has a RAP, Council encourages all parents to learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories. There are many excellent resources available, and many ways to get involved.

- The Narragunnawali program helps schools and early learning services foster knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions. There’s a range of learning resources and webinars and you can sign up for their newsletter at www.narragunnawali.org.au.
- Cultural competence courses are available from several organisations (eg www.ccca.com.au, aiatsis.gov.au/core).
- Look out for information next year about a ‘think tank’ we will hold to brainstorm how we can all promote this important work through our schools.
- Let us know what your school is doing in reconciliation so we can share it with others.●

Looking to 2020

Before the end-of-year rush descends on your volunteers, it pays to look ahead to the new year.

Make sure your P&C is ready to see out this year and welcome in the new with these essentials.

Who will be on your 2020 committee?

If you are expecting some members to leave your association at the end of this year, now is the perfect time to start thinking of ways to get more parents involved, or involved parents *more* involved! Here are some ideas to consider.

- **Can the P&C be prominent at any end of year events** your school runs? How about a table with snacks or tea and coffee, a friendly face, and some pictures of the ways the parent association has enhanced the school this year (the fun parents had at the trivia night; the new shade-sail you paid to be built). You could mention how great it is to see new faces at meetings and hear new points of view.
- **Make it clear that roles can be *shared*.** Taking on the treasury might be possible for someone, but they can't easily get to the bank, so re-arrange your roles to make way for two co-treasurers or a treasurer and assistant.
- **Ensure the P&C is relevant** and doing what parents and carers really want and value – that way, you'll more easily get buy-in.
- **Consider offering training**, especially for key roles that can be hard to fill, like canteen treasurer. If the P&C pays for the training, the volunteer gains new skills, confidence, and something to put on their CV, while your association gains a skilled volunteer. Council also runs free training each year to help office bearers understand and thrive in their roles.
- **Ask. Face to face.** Nothing beats a personal approach with other members of the community – “I'm retiring from the P&C, and we're looking for someone to take my role. I've had a lot of fun and plan on being around to help out next year if you're interested!”

Prepare your handover

Imagine that your predecessor had given you all the information you needed to do the job you



volunteered for! That is the sort of handover your latest recruit will love! Preserve your wisdom and knowledge and make it easier for the next committee with a short set of handover notes. Of course, we have resources to help including template handover notes for presidents, secretaries and treasurers ready for you to adapt.

Even if you are not planning to leave your current role, the school break is a great time to jot down the crucial things about how to do that role .

Prepare accounts for the auditor/reviewer

At the close of your association's financial year (31 December for almost all parent bodies), your Treasurer needs to prepare the accounts so they can be looked over by an external auditor/reviewer. Our [Treasurer Handbook](#) (see our website) has an extensive section on preparing your accounts and records, including a checklist of what you should provide the auditor/reviewer.

Remember that your association may not have to pay for an expensive qualified accountant. If your association has gross receipts of less than \$400,000 per annum then your accounts may be reviewed by any adult who is not an office bearer and has not assisted with the preparation of the accounts. It is simply someone willing to look over the accounts and verify that they are properly in order. With this in mind, Council is facilitating a 'book swap' whereby two P&C

treasurers audit each other's books. If you'd like to know more or be involved, contact our office.

Set the date - Annual General Meeting

Within five months of the end of your association's financial year, you need to hold an AGM. There is a [checklist](#) to help you prepare for the AGM on our website. Because you need to send out notice prior to your AGM, Term 4 is the time to set the AGM date so you can notify members of the meeting in accordance with the requirements of your association's constitution (usually around 2-4 weeks).

Celebrate – and thank everyone

It's important to make sure that your faithful helpers are thanked for their hard work and feel appreciated. Many schools put on a morning tea for volunteers and some parent associations head out for an end of year meal together. Council has also teamed up with the Education Directorate to

create official Certificates of Appreciation from us to all your volunteers. They are ready for you to use on our [website](#), along with more ideas for saying thanks.

The end of the school year is a great time to get parents together for a celebration. Why not hold a community BBQ, perhaps before your end of year concert? You could invite new parents who have children enrolled for next year. Consider offering the catering to another organisation, such as a local scout or sports group, as a fundraiser. Most will jump at the opportunity and this frees up your loyal volunteers to socialise while someone else cooks the sausages.

Events like these are a great opportunity to chat to parents about what your association has achieved over the year and how to get involved. You may even find someone who would like to be a committee member next year! •



FREE SUSTAINABLE EVENT ASSISTANCE FOR ALL PUBLIC EVENTS IN THE ACT

Events that participate in this program have access to free equipment, including delivery, and advice to assist them with strategies to:

- reduce energy and water usage
- reduce waste and increase recycling
- reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- educate and raise awareness of sustainability issues to event patrons

Events can range from small to large, such as school fetes, festivals, shows or sporting events.

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Our Green canteens

Canteen staff, volunteers and co-ordinators from ACT schools congregated to celebrate our wonderful school canteens and strive to make them even tastier, at this year's Canteen Connect.

Gathering momentum every year, Canteen Connect is a great event where those working hard in our school canteens can learn from others, exchange ideas and inspiration, and pause to reflect on their achievements.

And the achievements are significant, with 91% of public school canteens this year meeting the National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines. Over half of these are managed by volunteer P&C committees. It's a lot of work, and here at Council we are super proud of the job they do providing a range of healthy foods and a reliable canteen service for their communities.

Having that many canteens meeting the guidelines means that more than half of all the menu items in public school canteens are now GREEN – foods with high nutritional value and low in saturated fats, added sugar and salt. This represents a big turn around in the last decade. As the Guidelines were taken to heart by P&C canteen committees and reinforced with the Education Directorate's Food and Drink Policy, we have seen each public school canteen working hard to create, cook and promote healthy and tasty foods that their communities love.

It hasn't always been easy, and Council continues to be involved in making sure that the supports which canteens need are available through regular meetings with Nutrition Australia, ACT Health and the ACT Education Directorate.

Speaking of supports, there are new resources which Canteen Managers and subcommittees may find useful. We are very grateful to the work which ACT Health and Nutrition Australia have put into understanding the challenges of school canteens and supporting them.

Go For Green – quick online training

If you want to learn more about using the Traffic Light System – or just check that you're still on the right track – have a look at the new online Go for Green course. The course and accompanying guide take you through the process of classifying



Listening and learning at Canteen Connect

both freshly made and pre-packaged food and drinks. It also covers how to GREEN them up – all in a fun, interactive way. You can find the course on the [Fresh Tastes website](#).

If you complete the course and accompanying survey before 31 December, you'll go in the draw to win a prize pack of eco-friendly takeaway supplies for your canteen!

Boosting the flavour

We know from feedback from some P&C-run canteens that making flavourful dishes that kids and school staff like can be tricky while keeping the foods GREEN, but did you know:

- **Reduced-salt stock**, made as directed, is a GREEN ingredient and **can be added** to GREEN recipes.
- There is a **special allowance for Asian sauces and curry pastes**. While they are AMBER ingredients, sauces such as soy, sweet chilli, hoisin and oyster sauce and curry pastes can be added in small amounts to a GREEN dish without changing the GREEN classification. Reduced salt varieties must be used and up to 2 teaspoons (8ml) is allowed per 250g serve in meat and vegetable dishes or used as a marinade.

Ham has also been a hot topic over the years. Did you know that there are allowances for adding a small amount of lean ham, bacon, processed turkey, smoked fish or corned/roast beef (usually RED ingredients) to GREEN recipes

without making the recipe RED? The final product will be AMBER if one shaved slice (25g) of the processed meat is added to:

- a sandwich, roll or wrap which contains ½ cup of salad vegetables
- pizza with ¼ cup of cooked vegetables or ½ cup of salad vegetables
- baked potato with ¼ cup of other cooked vegetables

- frittata with at least ¼ cup of veges per serve. Two shaved slices (50g) of lean ham, corned or roast beef, bacon, or processed turkey can also be added to salads, to give an AMBER item as long as there's at least two cups of salad vegetables or one cup of cooked vegetables (eg. pumpkin).

Find all the nitty gritty in the Go For Green guide and the online course (links on the [Canteen Support](#) page of our website). •

Why I volunteer...

We wouldn't be here without our volunteers, so we love to hear what makes them tick!

Bonnie Roppola

Council Executive member & past P&C President and Vice-President at Southern Cross Early Childhood School



It's so important that communities have a voice and you can only do that if you have an organised group. So, if I have some time, I'm going to put that into community-based efforts.

I first went along to a P&C meeting because they put out the call for more people to help make quorum. I'm a massive believer in good governance. Without quorum you can't make decisions at meetings. Your organised efforts falter.

Since that meeting, I've been the fundraising co-ordinator, the President and Vice-President. I'm now wrapping up my involvement in my local P&C and so lots of people have been thanking me for what we've done. Reflecting on it, we've done a lot! We've now got a rolling calendar of events and fundraisers that the community look forward to, with a FAQ on how to run each of them. That relieves the burden on volunteer organisers.

I'm now enjoying my involvement with Council and getting insight into the background workings of what Council does and what happens in our schools.

Kirsty McGovern-Hooley

Council President & Farrer Primary P&C President



I initially got involved with my P&C because I'd been stuck at home with two kids for years! What I did there helped me to get back into the workforce. I put my hand up for treasurer, even though I had no background with accounts. I learnt new skills and went from there!

I then got involved with Council because I was advocating for keeping the Early Intervention Centres open. I saw Council's involvement and realised it was a great vehicle, with real impact. Here was a group of people with great ideas — and very welcoming — who were all passionate about public education. I strongly value public education and think it is important to put more effort and resources there. I can see that what we do at Council really does effect change. •

Editor's note: Kirsty volunteers for a number of organisations and was recently recognised in the 2019 Volunteering Awards for the Canberra Region. She took out the Corporate Volunteer of the Year for a community research project for Marymead, which she undertook through her employer, RSM. The project captured the experiences which people with autism and their carers have in accessing services.

Getting kids ready for school

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research and summarised here.

Visit the school with your child

In the weeks and months leading up to starting school, look for opportunities for visits. Ask your school if there's a formal orientation and transition program. Other opportunities include school open days, information nights, or events such as fetes and fairs. Check for information on the school's website, event calendar, newsletter or Facebook page or call the school directly.

If event timing is a problem, families can seek an individual appointment with the school to have a chat and take a tour. Schools are open to a child needing extra transition help as well.

Research shows that visiting is important for becoming familiar with and building connections to your school, and other parents and children.

"It's not just the physical — going to the school and learning where the toilets are — it's also about the people, knowing who's at school and building connections and relationships," Dr Hopps told the forum. "Having positive social relationships is a protective factor for children starting school."

Read to your child everyday

Reading to your child is important not only for developing language and literacy skills but also 'the disposition to read' — the desire to want to read and to enjoy reading and see a purpose in reading. According to Dr Hopps, "when we read to our children regularly we also form a really important connection with them over books, so that time and connection supports their wellbeing in working towards starting school."

Ask at your local library for books about starting school or see the transition resources on our website (www.actparents.org.au/early-learning). These books are a great way to start a conversation about starting school before you do school visits or transition programs start.

Connect with parents of other children

Schools often provide opportunities to meet other school families and new enrolments. Some

organise playdates or you may be able to organise this with other parents, either through the school or through the school's parent association.

According to Dr Hopps, positive social relationships support and buffer against challenges that children might have at school. "When children feel they know someone, and the school knows who they are — that's a really powerful protective factor."

Social connections are important for parents too. "Knowing other families that are going to the same school is important for our wellbeing and when we provide opportunities for our children to meet and get to know other children going to school we're supporting their social skills."

"In our research children tell us consistently there's two really important things about starting school and one is friends and the other one's school rules. So, if you're looking to build a conversation with your child in those first few weeks, ask them about the rules and what they are or ask them about their friends."

Talk positively about starting school

It's important for parents to share the things they enjoyed about school with their children. Focusing on our own good experiences and telling our stories helps to create positive expectations of school.

"Children will pick up on our feelings and emotions around starting school and it's perfectly normal to feel nervous or even devastated about a child going off to school. Some parents don't feel confident as parents and it's important to acknowledge this and to talk honestly with others about it. Keeping those emotions in check when we're talking about school around children is important also," Dr Hopps said.

Self-care for parents

In order to support your child, take some time out for yourself. You're starting school as a parent and that's a shift in identity as you're become a parent of a school child.

Kathryn commented that "for many families

there's changes in routines, changes to a lot of things and there can be challenges for families as children start school, so it's important that we do take the time for self-care... because we know that our wellbeing as parents in families is very tightly connected to the wellbeing of our children and if we're happy and healthy that impacts on young children as they start school as well."

The forum's other speakers included the ACT

Education Directorate's Michele Foley, who shared tips on parent engagement, and Linda Francis, who talked about the best way to communicate with your school. Elizabeth Lea talked about accessing transition support for children with developmental delay or disability. •

More information and resources, plus the audio of all the presentations, are on our website: www.actparents.org.au/early-learning.

Having schools ready for kids

The ACT Government recently released its Infrastructure Plan. We've summarised what it includes for schools.

The plan starts with the aim that every Canberra child has access to a great local school close to home, and is enabled to reach their potential through high quality, technology-based learning.

Student numbers growing

ACT Public school enrolments have grown by 26% since 2010 and are expected to increase a further 32% in the next 10 years. The growth comes from a shift from private to public schools (3% for primary schools from 2011-2018), natural population growth, and migration. Enrolments from NSW residents are also increasing as communities such as Googong, Murrumbateman and Queanbeyan grow.

Building, growing and upgrading schools

In the next five years the ACT Government has committed to new schools and upgrades:

- **Gungahlin:** New primary school at Throsby (opens 2022), high school at Kenny (2023), expansion of Franklin Early Childhood School and additional places at Gold Creek, Amaroo and Neville Bonner, and 'investigating options for an additional college facility in Canberra's North' (could be in inner north).
- **Molonglo:** New P-6 school in Denman Prospect will open in 2021.
- **Central Canberra:** Modernise Campbell

Primary and Narrabundah College to 'create a more comfortable learning environment and meet rising demand'. (The [Narrabundah College website](#) is currently taking public input on the college upgrade.)

The plan also states that the Government will:

- modify facilities to improve accessibility and support students with complex needs
- deliver up to date ICT infrastructure
- reduce emissions and pursue environmental sustainability
- improve school safety through car parking and traffic management upgrades as well as installing security-related infrastructure.

Looking further ahead, planned priorities include:

- further high school expansions in Gungahlin, North and South Canberra
- expansions for primary schools in the 'Northern Gateway' (area around EPIC, Watson and Northbourne Av.)
- expanding Canberra College
- feasibility studies to inform future school needs from urban renewal in Belconnen and Woden Town Centres
- new schools will be needed in Ginninderry, and additional P-6 schools are planned for Whitlam and 'Molonglo 3'
- additional transportable classrooms. •

At our P&C...

A Games Night at Namadgi school showed what can happen when school staff, students and P&Cs work together.

School events are a great way to build community and social connections. They can provide staff, students and families with a deeper sense of belonging and connectedness which is great for morale and mental health as well as the perfect environment for trust and learning to thrive. So it is not surprising that school events are a big part of what P&Cs do.

But providing a school-based event that teens want to attend can be tricky.

“We had been running Discos – one for the junior school and one for the seniors,” explained Namadgi School P&C President, Rhodina Ellison. “They were always popular with the primary-school aged kids, but our discos for kids from years six to ten were only getting a handful of kids coming. We had to cancel two senior discos because we didn’t sell enough tickets.”

So they replaced the senior disco with a Games Night.

“We had around 60 kids come, which for us was massive. Even better, we saw the older kids getting involved, socialising and having fun in a safe environment. We had kids who are normally introverted out there interacting with different kids, skipping or playing ping pong. Everyone had a great time.”

The venue was the school performing arts centre, decked out with a range of activities for the three-hour event.

“There were board games and card games, ping pong, and some bean bags for a rest,” said Rhodina. “The teachers brought down an interactive white board and set up a Wii attached to that, and outside there was a huge skipping rope.”

Crucial to the night’s success was the collaboration between the P&C, school staff and students.



Morningbird Photo, Pixabay.

Enjoying late night games on year 10 camp was the inspiration that students needed to drive a whole-school event.

“It was really driven by the year tens,” Rhodina said. “At the year ten camp held earlier in the year the kids played cards all night – that’s where the idea came from. They wanted to involve more people and make some money for their formal.”

“The year ten leadership group really drove the event. They surveyed students to see if that was the sort of event they would like. Then the year tens helped the staff to set up for the night.”

“The staff were great – they supervised and participated in each of the activities too. And the P&C did the canteen for the evening,” Rhodina explained.

“The kids were pleased to have a way of fundraising for the formal – they charged \$5 at the door - and the P&C sold food.”

“We’re not all about making money. If we can get the high school kids involved a bit more, that’s great. It was a really valuable evening for the school.”

“We are all keen to do it again. We would like to hold it on the last Wednesday of every term. That way it can grow and build on itself.” ●

Update: Buses

Council has recently had a number of productive meetings about buses with Transport Canberra (TC) and the Minister for Transport, and can provide this update.

Changes have been made to improve services and some other tweaks are expected soon. We feel that TC are listening to us and striving to improve services for school students. So do keep letting us know of problems which continue. Key changes:

- Extra services and some timetable tweaks have been made which should have eased crowding and timing problems, for example at Melrose High, Amaroo School and Red Hill Primary.
- There will be a timetable refresh for weekday services sometime in 2020. A number of timing problems identified by parents via Council should be addressed, including for Kingsford Smith School, Lyneham High (routes 30 & 31), Telopea, Giralang Primary, Forrest Primary.
- Extensions to 40km/h zones for some schools where students were catching buses outside of school zones (eg Kingsford Smith School).
- New traffic islands to make getting to bus stops safer (Mt Stromlo).

TC have also undertaken to review the need for an S-trip for Lyneham High and consider an upgrade of the Bonner shops stop (Neville-Bonner Primary students).

We know this doesn't fix all the problems that were identified to us. In some cases, there are too few students involved or the changes needed are not possible (eg streets can not be traversed by new buses), or will be continued to be looked at in future (eg access from Spence to Mt Rogers Primary, for Lyons families to primary schools, and for Fairbairn residents to Campbell's schools).

Parents need also to understand that TC does not consider students needing to stand as 'over crowding' as buses can legally carry significant numbers of standing passengers. Any reports of students left at bus stops, however, because of over-full buses are taken very seriously. •

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

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100 Maitland Street
Hackett ACT 2602

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

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.

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.

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.

Views expressed in this journal are not necessarily those of the ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations.

Our people

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Treasurer:	Crystal Cox
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Communications Officer	Janelle Kennard
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Executive Assistant	Melissa Lee

Dates to remember

26 Nov Council Annual General Meeting
7.00pm - 9.30pm
Centre for Teaching and Learning
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling

25 Feb Council General Meeting
7.00pm - 9.30pm
Centre for Teaching and Learning
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling

Dec 20 - Jan 27 Council office closed (term break)

Getting kids ready for school

Friendships, positivity, wellbeing and reading with children were among the top tips for a great start to school at Council's recent parent forum, reports Early Learning Officer Marina Spurgin.

Starting school is a big step and there are many ways parents and carers can support children to have a happy and satisfying transition to the adventure of the early school years.

Families need to focus on practical matters such as new routines, clothing, shoes and school lunches, school contacts and policies. But there are also important issues around wellbeing, such as new friendships with other children, relationships with new teachers, how children are feeling about starting school, what they are expecting, and how they'll respond to this new setting.

Council held a transition to school parent forum in September to help families with children who are getting ready for preschool and kindergarten in 2020. The forum is the first of a new quarterly series for preschool (and pre-preschool) parents.

Organised in collaboration with the ACT Education Directorate and a range of early education stakeholders, the event brought together educators, parents and researchers to increase awareness of the importance of educational transitions and provide strategies and tips for smoothing the way. Council was keen to promote discussion about transitions and help families build useful contacts and access resources that highlight the support available.

Lead speaker at the forum, Dr Kathryn Hopps, Adjunct Research Fellow at Charles Sturt University and 'Be You' consultant with Early Childhood Australia, has researched transition to



Starting school can be tricky—for kids and for parents—but there's lots of good advice and resources.

school widely and has a child of her own starting school next year. She outlined the four key research areas relating to educational transitions as opportunities, entitlements, aspirations and expectations of families, children and educators.

In relation to entitlements Kathryn noted that families are “entitled to be confident that their children will have access to education that promotes equity and excellence, that attends to the wellbeing of children, and that families are entitled to be respected as partners in their child's education.”

Kathryn presented five tips, developed from

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