



ACT Council of
Parents & Citizens Associations

ANNUAL REPORT

—
2022





**This report reviews the activities and achievements of the
ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations (Council)
during the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.**

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Cover photo

Charles Conder School P&C was one of 50 Council members delighted to hold fundraising stalls on the 2022 Federal Election polling day.

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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Land we live on in the Australian Capital Territory. We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the nation.



OUR PURPOSE

Council is the peak body for parent associations (P&Cs) in ACT public schools.

We assist and represent our member associations and, through them, ACT public school parents.



VISION

To build the school communities of tomorrow – a 'village' where parents and schools value educational outcomes and community partnerships based on mutual respect & trust.



MISSION

To engage and empower parent associations to engineer inclusive, resourceful and collaborative school communities.





OUR STRUCTURE

Council is a truly grass-roots organisation. Each member association elects one or two Council delegates. These delegates constitute Council and have voting rights at our meetings.

The members of our Executive Committee – our Executive Members – are elected from and by Council Delegates.



OUR STAFF

Council employs five part-time employees who staff the Council office and provide member assistance.

They support and are directed by the Executive Committee.

Left to Right:

Janelle Kennard (Communications Officer)

Julie McLean (Policy Officer), Melissa Lee (Executive Assistant)

Veronica Elliott (Executive Officer) and Marina Spurgin (Early Learning Officer)



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Our current Executive Committee was formed at our Annual General Meeting in November 2021.

Council is grateful for their volunteered time, effort and expertise.

Click through for more about each member and what motivates them to volunteer with Council.



Alison Elliott
President
Belconnen High School
P&C Delegate



Kirsty McGovern-Hooley
Vice-President
Individual member



Paul Buckley
Vice-President
Narrabundah College
P&C Delegate



Cecilia Shlegel
Secretary
Individual member



Sharon Ding
Belconnen High
School P&C Delegate



Sarah Everingham
Gordon Primary School
P&C Delegate



Erin Papps
Red Hill Primary School
P&C Delegate



Vivienne Pearce OAM
UC SSC Lake Ginninderra
P&C Delegate



Taymore Tabbah
Kaleen Primary School
P&C Delegate



Jane Trustum
Neville Bonner Primary
School P&C Delegate



Norma Yap
Harrison School P&C
Delegate





Council's Executive Committee take responsibility for the governance and strategic direction of the organisation. They oversee Council's representative work and assistance to members.

Executive members represented Council at regular meetings with key decision makers for ACT schools:

- with the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Yvette Berry
- with the Senior Executive Team of the ACT Education Directorate
- the COVID working group discussing implications, policies and practices in schools.

This year:



Council met all governance obligations and contractual requirements



The Committee drafted and ratified a new organisational Strategic Plan



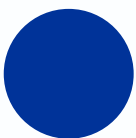
The Committee recruited a new Executive Officer



New member-engagement activities were requested and endorsed



An approvals process was endorsed



Nine Executive Meetings were held.



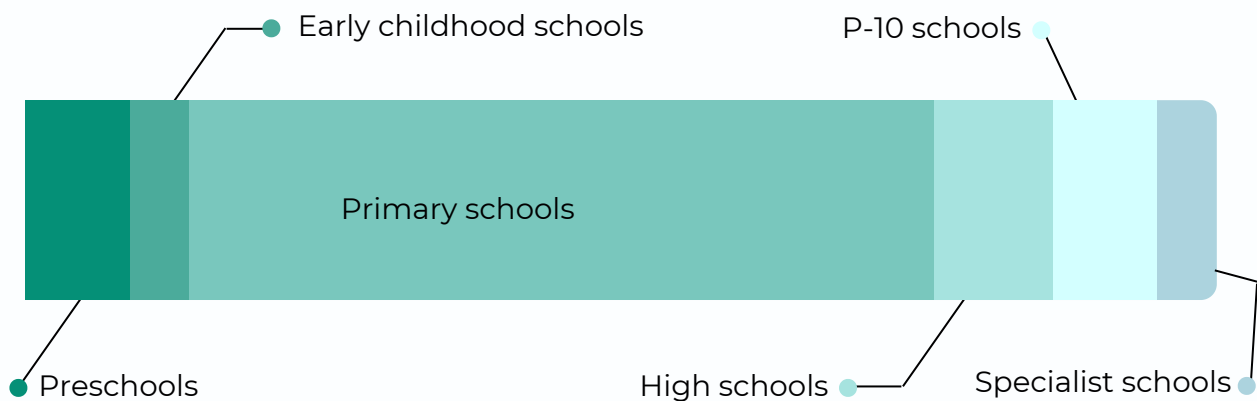


OUR MEMBERS

WHO THEY ARE

Affiliate members – Our P&Cs

All public school P&C Associations and Preschool Parent Associations are affiliated members of Council. We are proud to have 82 affiliate members, each making a valuable contribution to their school.



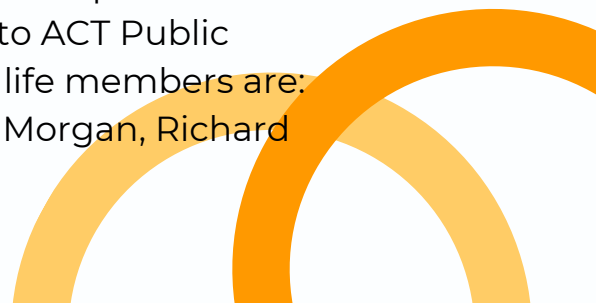
Associate members

Council also has nine associate members, including six playschool parent associations and some ACT schools and colleges which do not have a P&C association.

Individual and Life members

Council has seven individual members. Individual membership is open to anyone who has an interest in improving public education. Where a school P&C association does not exist, parents, carers and citizens from that school may apply for individual membership.

Over the years, Council has bestowed Life Membership on individuals to recognise outstanding long-term contributions to ACT Public Education, parent associations and Council. Our life members are: Grant Battersby, Pam Cahir, Trevor Cobbold, Ian Morgan, Richard Scherer, Vivienne Pearce, and Carolyn Harkness.





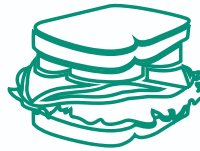
WHAT THEY DO

Our affiliate (P&C) members provide great value in our public schools, providing an avenue for parent engagement and discussion of school life, running community-building events, and raising funds for their schools. Many also run complex services for the benefit of the school community.

SERVICES FOR FAMILIES

31

healthy &
affordable
canteens



8



after school
care services
(1500 students)

54

low-cost
uniform shops



IMPROVING SCHOOLS - FUNDRAISING

\$0.4M
(estimate)

for school
resources
in 2021





OUR PARTNERS

We work constructively and collaboratively with several partners – stakeholders in ACT education. We value the different perspectives they bring and work to understand these perspectives, which to inform our discussions with our members and to ensure Council asks are practical, achievable and effective. In turn, we provide parent views and perspectives and well-considered advice to our partners across a range of aspects of education and school life.

ACT Education Directorate

Throughout the year we have worked constructively and in partnership with the Education Directorate. We have taken every opportunity to ensure that the Directorate knows the parent and carer perspective on public education in the ACT, from the big picture to specific details on individual aspects of school life. We work together via regular formal meetings, respectful relationships with key staff, formal consultations and feedback on draft documents.

We are grateful to the significant financial support provided by an annual grant administered by the Education Directorate.

ACSSO



Council is affiliated with the Australian Council of State Schools Organisations – the national peak body for parents in government schools. Council partners with ACSSO by providing a representative on the board of directors, another representative for general meetings, and by providing ACT-focused analysis and advice for national consultations. This gives ACT parent views federal representation.





Australian Education Union (ACT Branch)

Council meets regularly with the Union to discuss current issues for each organisation. This relationship and exchange of information continues to build mutual understanding of the different perspectives held by stakeholder organisations, which deepens Council's knowledge and leads to more informed discussions with our members.

This year, we shared parent views on topics such as safety at schools, inclusive education, teacher workload, school reports and pupil-free days.

Relationships & Sexuality Education Alliance

Council is an organisational member of the Relationships & Sexuality Education Alliance. Council Executive Officer, Veronica Elliott, is Vice-President of the Alliance. Council's partnership with the Alliance aims to advance the call for comprehensive relationships and sex education in ACT public schools.

Canteen stakeholders

Council partners with ACT Health, Nutrition Australia and the Healthy Kids Association to stay up to date on school canteens, primarily to provide support to, and represent, our P&Cs running public school canteens.





PRESIDENT'S REPORT

On reflection, 2022, whilst another challenging year for parents, staff and students, saw a return to some kind of normal, and that has presented its own challenges. Exhaustion has set in, and everyone, parents, students and staff are struggling.

We saw P&Cs return to their usual fundraising activities, helping reconnect communities. Parents are back on school grounds and face-to-face parent teacher interviews are occurring once again, something parents really value.

Council has continued to work very closely this year with the Education Directorate (EDU), the Education Minister's Office and Australian Education Union, as we navigated another year with COVID. We have provided valuable feedback on behalf of parents around easing of restrictions, mask wearing, remote learning, timely and clear communication, better support for students with disability, improving mental health supports. Council has also continued to provide support to P&C-operated canteens and Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services.





Although COVID has taken up much of Council's time, we have continued important work around:

- building member engagement
- supporting P&Cs to improve governance practices
- increasing the visibility of P&Cs, volunteers and their contribution to school life
- further implementing our Reconciliation Action Plan
- voicing parent views on school issues including enrolments, infrastructure, inclusion and outcomes for students with disability and additional needs
- better school-home communications
- thinking strategically about Council's purpose, vision and mission, and how things have changed during this unpredictable and challenging few years.

THANK YOU

I thank our amazing team in the office, and a very engaged Executive Committee, who share my passion around ensuring all students have the best education experience possible. Council's workload did increase again during 2022, and I thank staff, Janelle, Melissa, Marina and Julie, led by Veronica, for their constant support. Thank you also to Kirsty McGovern-Hooley for her support in her role as Vice-President.

I thank the community and our members for trusting Council, and myself, to be their voice, and for sharing their ideas, concerns and opinions.

I thank Minister Berry, and the Director General of Education, Katy Haire, and senior EDU staff for listening, hearing and acknowledging the difficulties for parents. We continue to grow a positive, respectful relationship. I also thank the Australian Education Union, with whom our engagement has grown through the shared common goal of making schools a better place for our children and staff.

I look forward to 2023, and encourage parents to join Council meetings, and help advocate for our children's education and wellbeing.





EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

In late December 2021, I took on the role of Executive Officer of Council, excited at the prospect of working closely with our Executive Committee, office team, members and education partners. With our direction clearly set by Council's strategic plan, and some ambitious goals, we set forth. Since then, the Council team and Executive have committed to:

- **Working collaboratively and constructively with our partners.** We regularly engage with our education partners and work together on issues and topics identified by our members.
- **Building member engagement.** We build quality relationships with our members, listen to their needs, and are committed to improving our member services and supports.
- **Building a well-run organisation.** We have streamlined our services and processes to improve our efficiency and effectiveness.

Working collaboratively and constructively with our partners, including the Minister for Education, the ACT Education Directorate and the Australian Education Union has enabled Council to achieve better outcomes for families and students. By working together in this





manner, each organisation has a better understanding the different perspectives we bring to education in the ACT, especially the voice of parents and carers, as heard from our members.

This year Council has deliberately focused on designing and implementing systems and processes to build on member engagement, which in turn aimed to improve member supports and services. Council now tracks the health of P&C and parent associations (meeting regulatory obligations) and provides one-on-one supports to help members to stay up to date with regulatory requirements.

Additionally, Council has focused on improving our internal systems. We have streamlined our workloads, implemented a shared task-management system and moved to a fully cloud-based system. This has improved record keeping, reduced duplication of staff effort and provided staff with greater work flexibility. We have also worked to sort through a vast store of legacy documentation, archiving or securely destroying material as appropriate.

We have also updated office fittings and technology. Council was fortunate to secure grant funding to purchase video conferencing equipment plus headsets and cameras for each staff member. These items will enable our office staff to all work online in the office or remotely if needed or required in future. We are also aiming to use this technology to improve our member offerings such as training in future.

MAJOR ACTIVITIES

Council's work in the past year has focused on three major areas.

- **Assisting members.** To help P&Cs thrive we provide a wide range of member services, activities, resources, and opportunities for networking and sharing of expertise.
- **Parent voice.** We represent the views of parents and member organisations to decision makers in ACT education and in the media.
- **Promoting parent engagement.** We foster and facilitate close and respectful partnerships between parents, P&Cs and schools.





ASSISTING MEMBERS

www.actparents.org.au

HELPING P&CS THRIVE

This year, Council continued to provide a comprehensive service to our members to assist them in running their parent associations. We help P&Cs thrive so that they can add value to their schools.

200+
member
enquires

35
tailored
support

\$1360
subsidies for
P&Cs
in need

6

Member
Training
sessions



7

General
Meetings



14

Bookswaps
facilitated



11

Special
interest
meetings



3

Member
magazine
issues



25

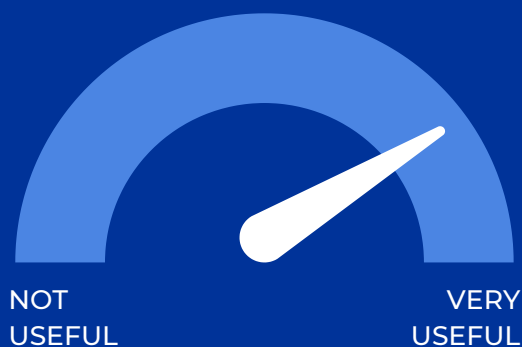
eBulletins



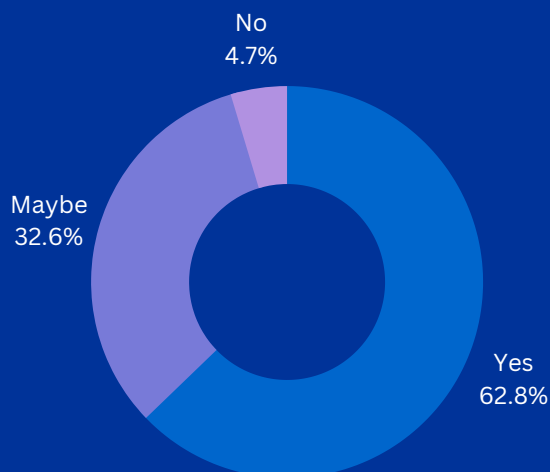
Assisting members

Our 2021 member survey showed that Council's services are useful to our members and provide value for money.

HOW USEFUL WAS COUNCIL IN SUPPORTING YOU THIS YEAR?



DOES COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP OFFER VALUE FOR MONEY?



We asked members what words first come to mind when thinking of Council. Our members overwhelmingly responded with ideas of support, resources and professionalism.



BUILDING MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

In 2022, Council focused on building our engagement with members to further enhance our usefulness to them and our value for money.

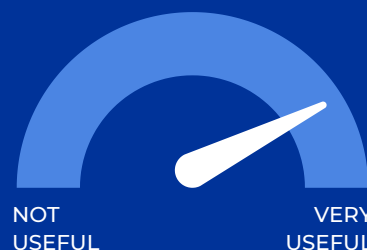
Five new initiatives were trialled.

- **Drop-in Q&A sessions.** We held these once per term in 2022, encouraging members with questions to drop into the online session to ask. Only one to three members attended each session. Staff provided detailed advice on reviewing and submitting outstanding Annual Returns, how to fill positions at AGMs, general meeting procedures, and guidance for a new committee.
- **Adding a brief section to all General Meetings to highlight relevant Council resources.** This has been well received, and has increased access to Council's resources. We will continue this initiative.
- **Continuing work towards utilising a centralised membership management system.**
- **Review and re-write of welcome letters** provided to members at the beginning of each year. These are now differentiated depending on whether the P&C volunteer is a new or returning member.
- **Targeted, tailored, direct assistance** for members who are behind on their reporting obligations to government (details [page 21](#)).



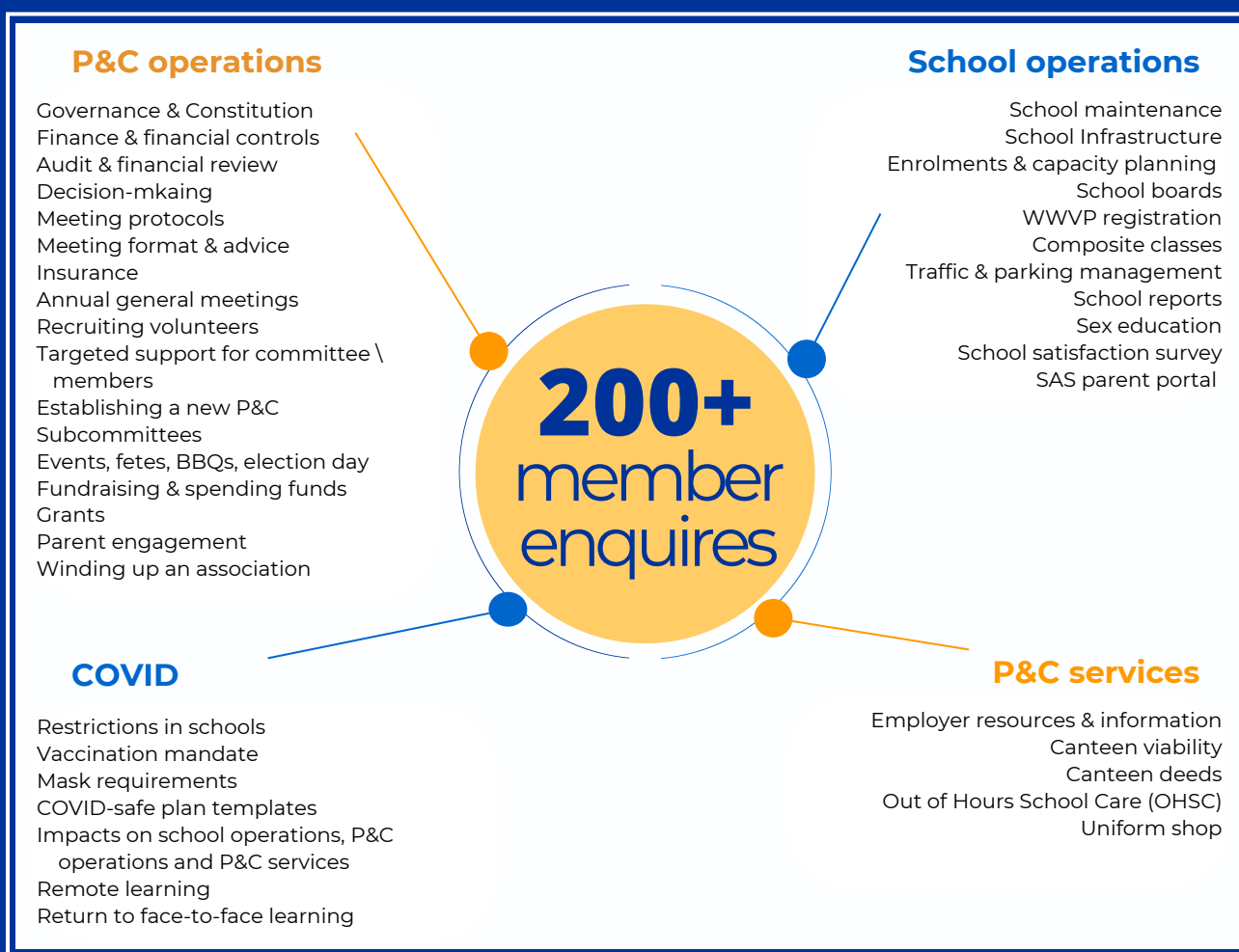
MEMBER ENQUIRIES

HOW USEFUL WAS OUR PHONE & EMAIL HELPLINE?



We received and answered over 200 phone, email and Facebook enquiries from members. Considerable staff time is invested in answering enquiries and this is a highly valued service to members.

Enquiries covered a great range of types and topics. These can be classified into four categories: P&C operations, P&C services, School operations and COVID-19.



TARGETED & TAILORED MEMBER SUPPORTS

Support to members is often more complex than a single enquiry and answer. We are proud of the detailed and tailored assistance which we provide members on a one-to-one basis when they require it for complex or on-going issues.

35
tailored
support

This year, this deeper level of assistance included:

- assisting members with their compliance (see below)
- conflict resolution
- complex constitution enquiries, including advice and comments on draft amendments
- support, information and resources for suspected fraud
- winding up a parent association
- supporting the formation of a new P&C association
- support for P&Cs with entirely new committees
- facilitating a P&C and school meeting once per term
- mentoring two P&C committees
- supporting P&Cs to de-escalate tensions in the parent community.

MEMBER COMPLIANCE

Council has specially focused this year on supporting all members to get their reporting to government up to date. An audit of members with outstanding Annual Returns to Access Canberra and ACNC at the beginning of 2022 revealed that 28 P&Cs had overdue returns. Of these, 10 P&Cs were more than three years behind.

Council staff contacted each of these P&Cs to offer support. The support provided was extensive. Some P&Cs needed intensive help to recover records or navigate the requirements of Access Canberra. It is estimated up to a quarter of one staff member's time was dedicated to this. As at the end of June 2022, the number of P&Cs with outstanding Annual Returns is 16, only four of whom have returns more than three years overdue.

TRAINING - BUILDING MEMBER CAPACITY

Our online training sessions provide fundamental information and skills for members to run their organisations well. Feedback surveys at the end of the sessions show that the sessions are helpful, content is relevant and presenters knowledgeable.



Member
Training
sessions



This year, we had good numbers of members registering for the six sessions (137 people) but moderate attendance (63 attendees).

Running these sessions takes significant staff time. In order to increase the number of members attending these sessions, Council will review its training strategy in 2023 so that this valuable content is provided to more members.

Delegate & Executive Member briefing sessions

We also ran sessions to assist Council Delegates and Executive members to better understand the workings of Council and their roles.

Building Cultural Integrity

In February 2021, we applied for a grant to build the cultural integrity capacity of 40 P&C representatives, however the application was unsuccessful. Council remains committed to supporting our P&Cs to build their understanding and inclusive practices.



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Council knows the last three financial years have been very challenging for P&Cs to raise funds. For this reason we have supported members, where financial difficulty has been demonstrated, by deferring or waiving affiliation fees and covering insurance premiums.

In the 2021-22 financial year, Council waived affiliation and insurance payments of six members.

\$1360
subsidies for
P&Cs
in need



INSURANCE

Council offers our member associations group purchasing of insurance targeted to member needs and operations. We provide members with general insurance information and refer specific enquiries to the insurance broker and provide questionnaire support to ensure members have appropriate insurance coverage

BOOK SWAPS

P&Cs can find a financial auditor/reviewer difficult to locate and expensive. to assist, Council facilitates a book swap scheme for small P&Cs where two treasurers review each other's books. We provide training to those involved, and link swappers.

COVID

The need for member assistance was again heightened this year due to constantly changing COVID regulations.

Our P&C members found themselves at the intersection of community COVID restrictions and special measures employed for schools. In this complex environment, Council worked with partners to clarify regulations for P&Cs and communicate these to members, covering the provision of services such as canteen and uniform shops, fundraising and P&C meetings, employee obligations, impacts of vaccine mandates and relevant COVID-safe measures.

We provided for members:

- regular updates and newsletters and a regularly updated page on our website dedicated to [COVID information for P&Cs](#)
- continually updated templates for P&C COVID-safe plans required for many activities and operations
- individualised assistance calls to over a dozen P&Cs running canteen/OSHC services
- article on [community building activities and events for lockdown](#) and a collection of [COVID-safe fundraising ideas](#).
- lobbying of ACT Education and Health Directorates, ACT Economic Development and Ministers for support for canteens.

See also how we represented parent views on COVID in the [Parent Voice section](#).

*"I wouldn't
have been able to
get through COVID
as a president
without your help"*

- P&C member

GENERAL MEETINGS

Our General Meetings continue to be a useful place for P&C office bearers to learn from others, access Council support, raise issues from their P&C and have input into Council directions.

Attendance continues to be strong with between 28 and 63 people attending our monthly meetings.

Topics discussed included:

- home learning and supporting parents with online learning
- COVID management for schools and P&Cs
- election day stalls
- pupil-free planning days
- voluntary contributions
- support for canteens and OHSC providers
- BSSS review of C courses
- Inner North & Gungahlin school capacity issues
- Council's strategic plan and priorities
- Early Learning representatives
- review of School Sports
- Council's reconciliation activities
- Parent Engagement Grants and projects
- traffic and parking around schools
- English as an additional language education
- school infrastructure & management of upgrades and maintenance.

We were also delighted to welcome guest speakers to further inform our meetings and inspire attendees:

- Tej Kaur, Education Directorate, explained about School Psychologists
- Yvette Berry, Minister for Education, discussed the Future of Education Phase 2 and school resourcing
- Maree Wright, North Ainslie P&C, showed how they reinvented the P&C
- Heidi Prowse, MIEACT presented their programs for schools and families.

"I value updates, getting tips and hearing from various guest speakers"

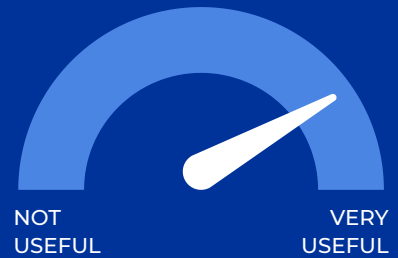
- meeting attendee

PUBLICATIONS & WEBSITE

Fortnightly e-Bulletin: Council Communicator

We produced 25 issues of our eBulletin this year, including additional special issues at times of peak need (such as the 2021 lockdown). The publication provides essential P&C reminders, news and information, hints and tips. MailChimp Statistics allow continuous monitoring and improvement.

HOW USEFUL WAS OUR EBULLETIN?



More staff time was devoted to the bulletin to improve the look, member engagement and branding, including:

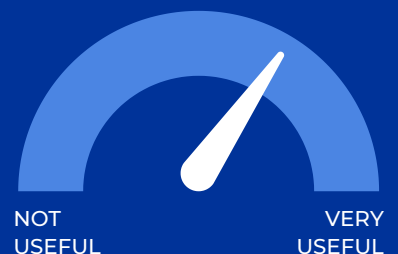
- creating branded tiles and graphics, especially to announce common sections and content types
- rework of the template with more colour
- highlighting web articles
- a new section providing an overview of Council's representative activities
- better integration with meeting information.

Results of our member survey showed that members find it very useful.

Member magazine: ParentACTion

Three issues of our comprehensive magazine for members were written, produced and distributed, containing in-depth articles, explainers, and sharing ideas and expertise. Articles are reproduced as web content and shared through social media and the eBulletin.

HOW USEFUL WAS OUR MEMBER MAGAZINE?



Following member feedback, we ceased hard copy production at the end of 2021 and updated the layout for electronic-only distribution. Given the lower usefulness of this publication to our members, a comprehensive paper for future options for the magazine will be prepared for Executive consideration in late 2022.

Assisting members

Website

Our website continues to hold a plethora of resources which our members find very useful, including checklists, sample documents and templates.

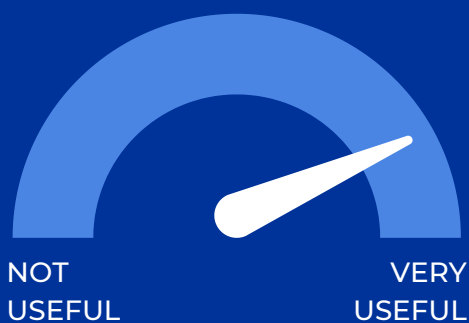
Usage continues to be good and we actively maintain the site. This year we added new content to share experiences between P&Cs and updated resources to assist in preparing grants.

In addition we kept our [COVID Information page](#) up to date with the latest Health and Education requirements. This has been a particularly valued source of information and resources for our members, as well providing vital schools information during the 2021 lockdown and return.

"The info on your website is great and I always look forward to reading the Council Communicator."

- P&C member

HOW USEFUL WERE OUR TEMPLATES AND CHECKLISTS?



The website is in need of reworking. Given the impact that membership management software is likely to have on the website, a major upgrade has been deferred until membership software is embedded.

ELECTION DAY STALLS



For the May Federal Election, Council was proud to work with member associations to assist and promote election day fundraising stalls.

Our members valued the contribution that Council made to their successful stalls and found our resources useful, as evidenced by data collected at our May General Meeting.

Council:

- sought direct confirmation from Government that election day stalls could proceed on school sites
- created a COVID-safe plan template for use by members which met current guidelines
- provided information to members in a timely manner
- encouraged members to share ideas and crowd-source answers on our Facebook P&C Leaders Group
- Collated an extensive and detailed list of member stalls and successfully promoted these widely through:
 - a Council media release
 - engagement with media contacts for in depth stories and interactive map
 - working with the Education Directorate's communications team.

SHARING EXPERTISE

CANBERRA P&C LEADERS GROUP

Established in April 2020 as a forum for parent association members to share expertise, ideas and experiences in running their associations, there are now over 120 members in Council's private Facebook Group: Canberra P&C Leaders.

This year there were 41 posts from members which garnered discussion on topics such as:

- useful resources such as online raffle sales, volunteer sign up, disco DJs
- COVID restrictions and requirements
- impact of pupil free planning days
- election day BBQ tips for planning, and COVID and AEC requirements
- fetes: suggestions for suppliers and planning questions
- ideas for speakers at P&C meetings
- P&C finances
- fundraising ideas
- grant ideas
- improving P&C meetings.

COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEES

Our subcommittees offer a special chance for members to focus on specific areas of interest to their parent association, such as specialty business areas. They are a valuable opportunity to exchange specialist knowledge, and discuss detailed and complex issues. Subcommittees also provide Council with another means to listen to members and parents on specific interest areas.

This year, three subcommittees were active. A report from each follows. Our Before and After School Care Subcommittee did not convene.



Assisting members

Disability Working Group

Report by: Veronica Elliott

Our Disability Working Group is a forum for Council to listen to and gather information from parents and carers of students with disability or additional needs in ACT public schools. All 30 members agree to abide by the terms of reference, understanding that Council uses general information to advocate to the ACT Education Directorate and Minister for Education, whilst protecting the privacy of individuals and families.

Council knows that the last two years have been extremely challenging for our families of students with disabilities or additional needs. The lockdown of August 2021, which started as a seven-day period lasted for nearly a whole term, with a staggered return to school.

Our working group members told us that many parents found learning from home impossible. For many parents of students with disability or additional needs, school provides a series of supports to engage in learning including one-to-one support and tailored individual learning materials. In most cases, these were not available during learning from home. Added to this were other pressures on families, juggling working from home with caring for children. Although ACT public schools remained open for students from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds (including students with disability) most parents found this option unattractive given their student's need for familiarity, routines and relationships with key staff. Accordingly, many of our parents of students with disability or additional needs were very frustrated, some packing the learning materials away and focusing on other needs.

Council advocated strongly for improvements to learning from home for students with disability to ensure that students could maintain some connection to their school and learning, and a connection to their peers. We hosted an online session for group members with key staff from the Education Directorate outlining how parents and carers could adapt learning materials or focus on developing students' life skills.

Understanding how difficult the year was for members of the group, we reduced the number of group meetings. Our final meeting in June 2022, was a community conversation with members to contribute to the ACT's Disability Strategy. Members were asked a series of questions such as: What makes a good life, and what are the challenges to a good life? Feedback demonstrated how school experiences of education are critical to support students with disability live a good life.

Assisting members

Canteen Subcommittee

Report by: Janelle Kennard

This subcommittee discusses all aspects of P&Cs running canteen services in schools, identifies challenges and areas where representative work and action are needed, and provides a forum for people involved in school canteens to share expertise. Members include a number of very experienced canteen and P&C people who provide great advice on tricky nitty-gritty questions which arise for our P&C members. This year the group met three times and has:

- identified issues for P&C-run canteens and possible resolutions. These issues have been taken to stakeholders for action
- discussed and explored various online ordering systems
- heard updates and provided feedback on ACT's single-use plastic bans
- learnt of various resources available to assist canteens
- answered questions brought to the group by members
- discovered more about canteen waste management
- clarified COVID requirements and changes
- discussed pies, group buying schemes, freezers, menu modifications, and more.

The work of the subcommittee has resulted in some progress:

- confirmation from the Education Directorate (EDU) that canteen maintenance is the responsibility of schools
- advice from EDU that funding for canteen reusables and a commercial dishwasher to reduce use of disposable containers can be sourced from school solar feed in tariffs
- attention by EDU to provision of internet to canteens
- production of an informative article with advice and menu options for special lunch days which members report are essential to canteen viability
- collection of financial data from canteens for analysis by Council.

"It is great to have a place where Canteen related issues can be easily resolved. I just wish I knew about your organisation years ago."

Assisting members

Reconciliation Action Plan Subcommittee

Report by: Viv Pearce OAM

This group (the RAPpers) guides Council's Reconciliation Action Plan. It is open to all members of Council but typically it is the Executive or ex-Executive members and our hardworking office who make up the group. We are still missing an important part of our group, a First Nations parent. Going forward we need to encourage more parents to join. Most work occurs via email, with a meeting once a term for planning. Fresh faces, fresh ideas are needed.



COVID continued to affect our plans with fewer face-to-face conversations with local First Nations people and articles for members than planned. Our tips on how to celebrate NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week have been helpful to P&Cs. Regular reporting at General and Executive meetings has kept our progress (very slowly) along the road to reconciliation in the minds of our members. This in turn has sparked conversations at local P&Cs around what is happening at a school level.

To build on the success of our 2020 Colouring competition the RAPpers hoped to run another competition centred around the 2021 NAIDOC Week theme of "Heal Country". The intent was to design a special place within the school where bush food and fibre plants could be studied, and the culture of our First Nations people could be discussed. Competition plans were put on hold as we realised more background work to support entries would be needed. We applied for grant funding to deliver Cultural Integrity training for P&Cs and give parent volunteers greater confidence to act in this area, but we were not successful.

The revision in the coming months of Council's policy on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders curriculum will be important and needs to continue with a Reconciliation policy for Council next year.



PARENT VOICE

www.actparents.org.au



REPRESENTING MEMBERS & PARENTS

We provide parent – and P&C – perspectives to government across all aspects of the public school experience, from transport to teaching, canteens to classrooms

TOP ISSUES & OUTCOMES

COVID

During the 2021 pandemic lockdown and period of remote learning, Council sought parent views and experiences via our member P&Cs and directly. We were then able to voice what we heard from parents – their views and needs – to decision makers in government including the Minister for Education and senior staff at the Education Directorate (EDU). This included experiences with at-home learning, conditions for the return to school, and wellbeing and safety measures.

We heard a huge range of views, and were able to represent the breadth of needs, advocating for flexibility and family choice. Parents also wanted clear and timely communications and we have pushed for this continually during the pandemic, working collaboratively to enhance information flow and providing questions for EDU's FAQ for families.



Parent voice

When it came to the struggles of home learning, we voiced these to EDU and the Minister so that they understood. We also talked about the nitty-gritty of remote learning on TV, radio and in the press. We were pleased to see a much improved home-learning experience for most families in 2021 compared to 2020.

Parents were also concerned about family wellbeing so Council advocated for additional supports to be made available to families.

We ran a COVID representative input session in September to discuss the conditions under which parents would be comfortable returning to school from the pandemic lockdown. It was attended by representatives from 45 ACT public schools along with senior staff from the Education and Health Directorates and the ACT Minister

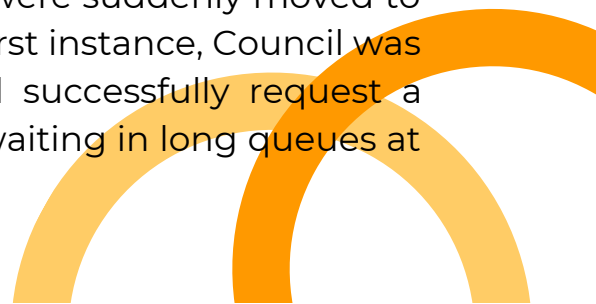
for Education, Yvette Berry. This provided comprehensive parent feedback, views and preferences around COVID safety, return to school, learning during the pandemic and supports needed directly to decision makers when decisions were being made on short time frames.

Early in the 2021 lockdown, we also held a session specifically focused on at-home learning for students with disability and/or additional needs so that families had the information they needed before home learning began. To further support these parents, our Disability Working Group held two further online forums gathering feedback on how it was going and sharing experiences and strategies.

EDU staff attended one of these sessions and heard direct feedback from parents' experiences to take back to schools and colleagues for improvement in how home learning was being delivered.

Additionally, Council advocated – with the assistance of the local P&Cs – for the communities of at least 15 schools who were suddenly moved to online learning due to COVID exposure. In the first instance, Council was able to represent the school community and successfully request a dedicated testing facility, saving families from waiting in long queues at other testing sites.

"Thank you to council for all the work you've been doing advocating for families and communicating with them"





ENROLMENTS, INFRASTRUCTURE & CAPACITY PLANNING

Following on from our submission to the Inquiry into the Management of ACT School Infrastructure, Council continued to be a vocal advocate for greater and more well planned school infrastructure improvements. We focused on this in our [submission to the ACT budget](#), calling for quality learning environments for all, in discussions with decision makers, and in media appearances.

This year, parent concerns about school capacity in several regions grew, notably the Inner North and Gungahlin. Council has requested measures to address capacity via formal submissions and meetings with decision makers. We have also made [comment to the media](#). In response to Council requests, the Education Directorate held regional meetings to explain to school and parent representatives what long term plans were being made, and hear parent concerns first hand. We continue to support Gungahlin College P&C to seek effective measures to relieve capacity pressures.

VISIBILITY OF P&CS AND RECOGNISING VOLUNTEERS

P&Cs tell us that their greatest challenge is getting enough volunteers. One way Council is addressing this is to raise the profile of school P&Cs, their volunteers and what they achieve. Throughout this year, we continued to do this, being deliberate about the way we speak in all media opportunities, advocating to decision makers for better recognition for P&Cs, and highlighting to Education staff and the Minister what P&Cs do.

We are now seeing mainstream media use the term 'P&C' without further explanation. P&Cs being more common-place can only assist in their profile and growth.

We also focused on Volunteer Week, highlighting Council's own volunteers and their personal stories, and encouraging and helping P&Cs to similarly acknowledge the week.

We are also grateful for the support of the Education Directorate media and communications team – we provided P&C contacts which they highlighted in [stories of P&Cs](#) and the wonderful contributions our volunteers make to their schools.

Council collaborates also with the school improvement team to support positive relationships between P&C and schools.



LISTENING TO MEMBERS & PARENTS

Council listens to the views, expectations and concerns of parents and carers through parent associations via meetings and enquiries, as well as directly from parents and carers, via surveys, enquiries and social media. In addition we specifically asked members and parents their views on:

- COVID concerns for P&Cs/ parents and conditions for return to school (August 2021)
- home learning experiences (September 2021)
- return to school, conditions and safety measures (October 2021)
- our services for members (member survey November 2021)
- return to school conditions (January 2022)
- family experiences when starting preschool and kindergarten (starting school survey, June 2022).



REPRESENTATION TO DECISION MAKERS

We used every opportunity this year to voice parent views to decision makers for ACT schools.

MEETINGS WITH GOVERNMENT

Throughout 2021-22, we met regularly with:

- ACT Education Minister
- Senior Executive Team at the Education Directorate
- COVID working group

FORMAL SUBMISSIONS

We captured parent views in formal submissions:

- [Submission](#) to the 2022/23 ACT Government budget
- Submission to the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion on Teaching Quality in ACT Public Schools

OTHER INPUT & FEEDBACK

ACT

- Written feedback and meeting with Audit Office on ACT Childhood Eating and Active Living programs
- Complaints handling
- Issues paper: P&C run canteens - presented to canteen stakeholders

Federal

- Change to copyright laws
- Classification of P&C employees

REPRESENTATIVES ON GOVERNMENT & COMMUNITY COMMITTEES

Elected parent representatives, via Council, sit on many ACT Government and stakeholder committees, providing parent perspectives and valuable insights on a range of topics. Reports from Council representatives on each committee are provided here.

ACT Council of Social Services (ACTCOSS)

Representative: Viv Pearce OAM

I attended the ACTCOSS 2021 AGM as Council's delegate and to nominate for Board, Council having been asked to nominate for the ACTCOSS Board. I thought a closer link would benefit both organisations, however, I was not successful. As many of ACTCOSS activities have been online, I have not been able to effectively network with other NGOs this year. Council has not input into ACTCOSS policies or attended their online conference in 2022.

A benefit of our membership of ACTCOSS is provision of regular advice and workshops on a variety of topics. Council should access these when appropriate to increase the skill levels amongst our parent members and office. I would encourage anyone who interested in advocacy for vulnerable members of our community to put their name forward for this position next year, as I resign. It's not a large time commitment but is interesting.

ACT Schools' Animal Ethic Committee

Representative: Dr. Richard Lucas

This Committee looks at the standard of care and welfare of animals housed in or belonging to all ACT schools. It conducts inspection visits to schools each year to review the standard of care and housing of animals. The committee received and approved applications from several schools and made site visits.

Board of Secondary School Studies (BSSS)

Representative: Norma Yap

The first term of 2022 presented many challenges for schools as COVID continued to disrupt everyone's work schedules and deadlines. Despite everything, the Office of the Board of Secondary School Studies continued with their work and carried out, amongst other things the Professional Learning Workshops for teachers and Student Forums.

Professional Learning

In Term 1, the BSSS team successfully delivered a suite of online professional learning workshops including Introduction to the BSSS and the ACT System, Curriculum planning for the English and HASS Frameworks, Designing a Program of Learning and the BSSS Quality Assessment Guidelines. In Term 2, the BSSS team conducted online professional learning workshops including the BSSS Quality Assessment Guidelines, Assessing Group Work, Designing a Program of Learning, and School based Moderation and Meshing.

Student Forum

The Forum is a great opportunity for your student leaders to have a say at a system level. Gathering information through these forums enables the Office of the BSSS to understand the issues that impact students which, in turn, informs policy and innovation. The composition of the BSSS Student forum consists of nominees from across senior secondary schools. The BSSS Student Forum provides an opportunity for young people to have a voice in their senior secondary education. Students work directly with the Office of the Board and take a cross sectoral leadership role within the ACT, contributing their ideas and experiences in support of the future direction of education in the senior years of schooling.

Disability Education Reference Group

Representatives: Sharon Ding, Kirsty McGovern-Hooley, Viv Pearce OAM

The Group is convened by the ACT Education Directorate (EDU) and has broad representation from government and community organisations involved in supporting and advocating for students and young people with a disability. It provides a forum for information sharing, contributes to policy development and provides advice around the education of students with a disability in ACT public schools. Council representatives provide advice and offer the perspectives of public school parents on a range of disability education issues.

This year the Group endeavoured to include a student with disability by supporting their attendance and input to the Group with a support person in attendance for them.

The Group has been involved in the consultation phase of the EDU's Inclusive Education Reform efforts, beginning with a consultation process that started in Term 4 of 2021 and continued in Term 1 of 2022. Council provided feedback on the surveys designed to collect input from families and students on their experiences and ideas.

Council representatives participated in the Inclusive Education Workshop conducted for the Group by EDU. Themes that emerged:

- workforce capability
- culture and attitudes
- infrastructure
- the importance of relationships and genuine choice
- engagement with families
- working collaboratively.

Other areas of discussion included the importance of shared language; the impact of diagnosis; opportunities to leverage what is already available; how to create inclusive schools; the visibility of people with disability; high expectations; and student voice and agency. The Group's workshop feedback will be used to inform the development of the Inclusive Education Strategy.

The next phase of the Inclusive Education Reform work involves consulting with school staff, with information about the community conversations and evidence report to be published on the web.

Collaborative Working Group on Food at School

Representative: Janelle Kennard

The Group brings together government and nongovernment organisations to work together to help schools and canteens provide healthy and sustainable food services. It is a great place for us to stay up to date with new resources, projects and programs, ideas and training to pass on to our members who work so hard to create great canteens.

This year, I was able to provide parent and P&C perspectives on topics the Group discussed:

- issues and difficulties for P&C-run canteens
- public school Food and Drink Policy
- trial of free breakfasts and lunches at schools
- single-use-plastics ban
- the procurement of canteen services in schools without them.

I was also able to express P&C concerns and ask questions on behalf of Council's internal [Canteen Subcommittee](#), for example about canteen maintenance and internet provision.

Healthy Schools Network

Report: Melissa Lee

The Healthy Schools Network ACT is a collaboration of over 30 local not-for-profit organisations working in the area of student health and wellbeing. The Network maintains a website as a 'one stop shop' for ACT teachers and parents to access local information and support on a range of health and mental wellbeing issues. The Network shares information on services its members provide and meets once a term to connect and to hear from interesting guest speakers. Topics covered at meetings this year included presentations by the Teacher Quality Institute on how organisations can engage teachers with professional learning opportunities, and by ACT Health on the school youth health nurse program and the ACT health promotion grants program. Council representatives attended the school youth health nurse program presentation which was beneficial in furthering our understanding of how the program is administered across ACT high schools, the role of a youth health nurse and plans for expanding the program.

Safe at School Taskforce

Representative: Veronica Elliott

Student wellbeing and safety at school is a key interest of members. Public schools that meet the needs of their students also meet the needs of school staff. The ACT Education Directorate has implemented a Safe at School Taskforce to lead a transformation of safety culture, to ensure the safety of students and staff.

Our Executive Officer, Veronica Elliott has accepted a nomination to the Safe at School Advisory Group beginning in the next financial year (2022-23). The advisory group will provide expert guidance for consideration by the taskforce.

Veronica is committed to providing the parent perspective using the experiences and insights gained whilst policy officer, working alongside P&Cs, parents and carers, particularly our disability working group members and parent support group for violence in schools. Veronica will also bring the deep insights gained from Council's and the Education Directorate's *Building Strong and Safe Communities for Learning* joint project, as well as the findings from the *Schools for All* report.

Council is committed to keeping members informed of the work of the taskforce, and will be looking for opportunities to collect further member input over the next year.

School Transport Liaison Committee

Representative: Janelle Kennard

This group, hosted by Transport Canberra, is a forum for concerns about transport services for school students. The Committee includes stakeholders from ACT public, catholic and independent schools and their respective peak parent organisations. Once again, the committee did not meet this year.

2XX radio station Board

Representative: Viv Pearce OAM

Council fills the Education Representative position on the 2XX Board. 2XX is a not-for-profit community radio station providing a voice for many diverse groups who have limited access to mainstream radio. Programs are produced and presented by over 100 volunteers.

This year I have continued in the Vice President Board position helping with governance, volunteer issues and policy matters. The major focus this year and next will be increasing the revenue stream so that 2XX can continue to serve the ACT community. I have tried to provide input into education, disability, environmental and gender equity issues which I see as my strength areas. A volunteer face-to-face Thank You afternoon which I helped organise was a great success. Discussion at this event around suggested improvements and how to make 2XX more financially sustainable were particularly usefully feedback for the Board

COVID has continued to cause problems, making increasing the volunteer base and solving HR issues more difficult. 2XX is looking to increase volunteer capacity in all areas including the Board position. If you are interested, contact the office. Like any volunteering position, you learn additional skills and meet interesting and inspiring people along the way.

By contributing to the governance of the station, Council is helping diverse voices to be heard. We are also helping to increase the understanding of parents' views on the ACT's education system within the general community.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATION

Australian Council of School State Organisations

Representative: Paul Buckley

ACSSO is the federal body representing State and Territory parents and citizens organisations. Council is a full member of ACSSO and as such nominates one of the directors of the ACSSO board. We also nominate a Member Representative to attend ACSSO general meetings and AGMs.

ACSSO conducted three national family surveys this year. One received in excess of 9,000 responses – one third of those we identified as a non-mask lobby – the rest however were genuine

The surveys revealed that parents were gravely concerned about their child's mental health as a result of the pandemic. As such we have done considerable work with Life Skills Group and raising awareness through a series of webinars hosted by LSG group.

ACSSO also ran a series of pre-Federal. Election webinars, featuring Tanya Plibersek and Mehreen Faruqi. A series of webinars on Family Engagement has also begun, tying in with the theme of ACSSO's National Conference to be held in the second half of 2022.

The organisation has also been looking inside and reviewing its structure to meet the needs of parents and member bodies.

ACSSO continues to represent parents. Submissions in 2022 included:

- ACSSO Submission to Copyright Access Reform Bill Consultation
February 2022
- ACSSO Submission to the Productivity Commission Review of the National School Reform Agreement July 2022



For Council, there is great value in being at the table with national discussions and bodies, to provide our input at the Federal level.

REPRESENTATION IN MEDIA

Council continued to voice the views of parents, P&Cs and Council in the local media. This year, our representatives made 79 media appearances and we issued six press releases. Media comment focused on issues such as:

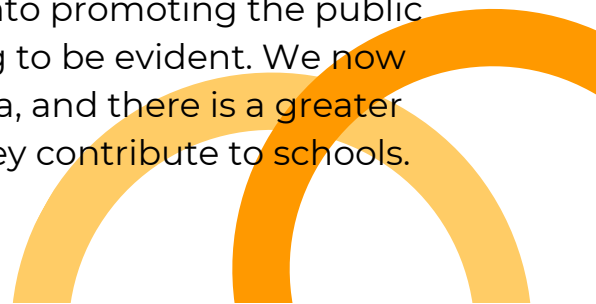
- COVID effects including lockdowns, home learning, school closures, return to school, safety measures, provision of RATs, difficulties for P&Cs and exclusion of parents
- school infrastructure
- capacity issues in schools
- election BBQs
- relationships and sexuality education
- pupil-free days
- NAPLAN results

We also assisted P&C members to have their say directly in the media, for example, distributing press statements from Miles Franklin Primary P&C (playground fire) and Calwell High School. In addition, we promoted story suggestions to journalists which highlighted our members' successes and needs such as Aranda Primary's waste-reducing canteen and several P&Cs struggling with and recovering from the pandemic.

Council also helped generate significant media interest in member election day stalls for the May 2022 Federal Election by compiling a detailed list and releasing this to media outlets (see [Member Services](#)).

The considerable effort which Council has put into promoting the public profile of P&Cs over a number of years is starting to be evident. We now see the term 'P&C' being used routinely in media, and there is a greater appreciation for the role P&Cs play and what they contribute to schools.

www.actparents.org.au





PROMOTING PARENT ENGAGEMENT

www.actparents.org.au

Promoting parent engagement



CONNECTING PARENTS & SCHOOLS

Research shows that when the partnership between schools and parents is working well a family's school experience is enhanced and student development, educational attainment, attendance, behaviour, and wellbeing outcomes all increase. Council therefore supports and promotes effective parent engagement and strong partnerships between families and schools with a range of activities and efforts, outlined below.

We place a special emphasis on promoting parent engagement in the early years of school life as described on pages 51- 57.

Promoting parent engagement

ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE & PROMOTE ENGAGEMENT

IMPROVING HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

Council has provided extensive input on communications from schools to parents and carers to enhance understanding between schools and families. Topics on which we have suggested enhanced communication included COVID procedures, the need for pupil-free days, sudden school closures due to staff availability, and mould in school buildings. We have advocated for clearer communications, highlighted gaps in understanding, and provided detailed feedback and edits on draft document. By working with the Directorate in these ways, parent-school partnerships have been enhanced.

We also provide information to members and parents to help them better understand school challenges to foster constructive relationships.

COVID RESTRICTIONS: ADVOCATING

This year, one of the greatest barriers to parent engagement were COVID measures which restricted parent access and attendance to school grounds. Many valuable, informal opportunities for connections were lost completely. In addition, moving formal engagement events, such as parent-teacher interviews, online was a barrier to some parents.

Council received ongoing feedback from members that parents felt locked out of schools and disconnected. These views were shared and quoted in the local media on a number of occasions.

To minimise the damage done, Council advocated strongly, and at every possible opportunity, for a return to parent attendance on school sites in discussions with senior Education staff.



Promoting parent engagement

ARTICLES TO SHARE EXPERTISE

Council helps promote great ways to enhance parent engagement to our members by sharing stories of successful practices from other members. Real world examples are very effective in inspiring others in similar positions to take action.

Stories included:

- [Reinventing the P&C for busy parents](#) – getting more engagement and involvement by growing the P&C
- [A space to connect](#) - how one school and P&C created a garden space to learn, yarn and connect to Country and community
- Examples of activities of [Early Learning Representatives](#) and their benefits
- [Events and gestures to welcome new parents.](#)



Promoting parent engagement

SPECIAL FOCUS: THE EARLY YEARS

Promoting good school-home relationships is especially important for the early years of school. Council focuses on preschool, kinder, and new school parents through our enrolment, transition, and orientation activities.



PRESCHOOL ENROLMENT CAMPAIGN

Parents and carers sometimes need assistance enrolling their child in preschool. Council expanded our annual preschool enrolment campaign with social media, a media release and ABC radio interview urging Canberrans with three-year-old children to enrol for preschool before the deadline.

ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations - reminder

Preschool starters 2023

Apply by June 3, 2022

If your rocket-child turns 4 by April 30, 2023,
apply online for a preschool place now

For preschoolers starting 2023
15 hours per week
x40 weeks per year

Apply online via
ACT Education Directorate

let's play!

Promoting parent engagement

STARTING SCHOOL SURVEY

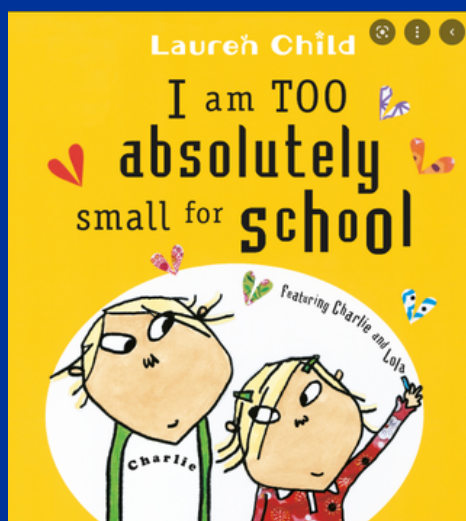
Council's parent survey *Starting preschool or kindergarten in 2022 - A positive transition to school* sought feedback on family experiences of starting public school education in 2022.

The survey showed that smooth transitions to preschool and kindergarten were often scaffolded by clear and timely school and family communications, which understood the information needs of the parents to assist them navigate the school experience.

Overwhelmingly, parents and carers appreciated the individual and supportive approach of their child's teacher, especially for anxious school starters. Given starting preschool and school is a significant transition in a child's life, parents and carers also appreciated opportunities to build relationships and support networks with other parents.

Results were shared with participants and P&Cs and used to inform content for the transition to school parent forum. The results will continue to be used in Council's advocacy for better experiences for families at this crucial time.

STARTING SCHOOL RESOURCES



Council also creates, curates and promotes a range of online resources to support families during their transition to school. For example, a list of [great books to read about starting school](#) and a range of practical things which other parents have found useful in preparing for school, from practice opening lunchboxes to meeting other families at the playground.

Promoting parent engagement

TRANSITION TO SCHOOL WEBINAR

Council's third annual *Transition to School Forum* was held in collaboration with EDU in September 2021. Preparation for school, particularly for the first child, continues to attract interest from parents and carers.

The webinar provided practical tips to help families plan and prepare children for preschool and kindergarten as well as information from expert speakers about early education transitions – what the research tells us, supporting children, and understanding the school-family partnership. Over 80 registered for the live webinar with 40 attending.

The recorded webinar is available on Council's [website](#) and has received an additional 90 views.

YouTube

How might children and families expect to feel

Anxious Nervous excited proud keen woohoo

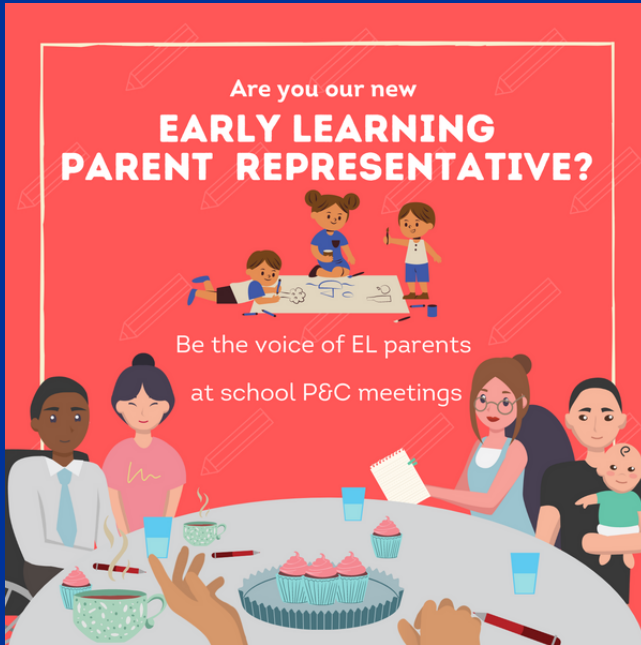
www.education.act.gov.au

ACT Government Education

Simone Hobday

Promoting parent engagement

EARLY LEARNING REPRESENTATIVES ON P&CS



Council continues to encourage primary school P&Cs to appoint an Early Learning (EL) parent representative to their committees. Currently, over 20 are listed in Council's database and interest continues to grow.

These representatives have strengthened the capacity of Council's early learning work by sharing expertise across the early learning network, highlighting the experiences of

new parents and families in the early school years, and promoting the importance of parent engagement and school family partnerships.

The role is both an acknowledgement and an invitation to parents of preschool and kindy children. P&Cs have reported that small gestures have big impacts when welcoming new families.

Council provides resources for EL parent representatives and these continue to grow, including webpage, templates, funding and grant support. P&Cs with a preschool-kindy parent representative can also access support for responding to early years families.

Collaborating with teachers and staff, EL parent representatives also provide a valued link for preschool and kinder teachers. Council is working with the Directorate to outline guidelines that can help when collaborating with school administrators and teachers, and early learning parents/carers.

Promoting parent engagement

WELCOMING NEW PARENTS

The first interactions which parents have with a school are crucial for establishing great partnerships, engagement and a sense of belonging. Council has focused on supporting P&Cs and families to make this time positive.

Council successfully applied for a 2021 Children's Week Grant to support P&C projects which welcome families starting school in 2022. We matched the \$1000 funding with a further \$1000 and invited P&Cs to apply for \$200 to assist with welcome activity expenses. The money was distributed to ten P&Cs to hold events that welcomed new preschool and kinder families through small play and network activities.

The idea was to support parent associations to welcome families, provide P&C information and parent resources, and opportunities for children to play and make friends. The results were wonderful. With the creativity and drive of P&C volunteers, that little bit of money went a long way and spread a lot of joy.

Projects funded included:

- family picnic to coincide with P&C AGM, complete with children's entertainment during the AGM – over 100 people attended!
- welcome flyers
- playdough pot and welcome letter provided to each new family.

See our article on [small events with a big impact](#).



Promoting parent engagement

EARLY LEARNING SUBCOMMITTEE

This committee promotes the importance of preschool education and supports parent engagement in the early years of school. It provides a forum for Council's Early Learning (EL) members (parents and parent associations in preschools and junior primary) along with advocacy, advice, submissions, and representation on behalf of the committee in support of public education.

The subcommittee's quarterly meetings have remained online this year. Initially implemented due to COVID restrictions, the convenience of the online format has proven to be popular allowing parents and carers with children to join the evening meetings from home.

The committee discussed parent experiences starting school, the importance of being welcomed and connected early, and the value of Early Learning Representatives on P&Cs. The committee also focused on the following topics.

Ongoing COVID challenges

Parents acknowledged that COVID was a significant issue for preschool and kindergarten families as restrictions severely limited access to schools and classrooms. Learning from home is very difficult for this cohort. Returning to school after lockdown, while welcomed by early years parents, also caused concern about COVID-safe practices and implications. Many children missed the social element of school and there were mixed responses from relief to genuine concern for vulnerable people.

The preschool and kinder years are important educational transitions for children and families and parent access – accompanying their children – helps to reassure and settle their child, promotes partnering with schools and teachers, views a child's classroom and learning, and provides opportunities to network with other parents ie modelling new friendships and organising playdates.

Promoting parent engagement

Families said they felt excluded, especially those that were new to their community or unfamiliar with the school. This was reflected in the praise for teachers that actively mitigated against the negative impacts of COVID during orientation and transition to school activities.

The importance of relationships cannot be underestimated for early years cohorts and their families. Opportunities to develop relationships have been further restricted by teacher shortages or frequent changes, as well as remote learning.

Schools provided learning materials for remote learning but parents might be struggling as they haven't had a lot of exposure to the classroom environment or don't understand expectations. To help, Council provided resource links for parents/carers with preschool and kinder children in remote learning.

Preschool OSHC trial

Parents who must manage the cost and transitions between government preschools and centre-based services continue to find this very challenging. Where families access the free 15 hours per week of preschool but require further hours to meet their working arrangements find this often results in a substantial time and cost burden. When schools collaborate with non-government services in an effective model of delivery, children and families experience one continuous service. The preschool OSHC trial was held at four ACT preschool sites and is being expanded.

Themed events

Council's Early Learning Officer and subcommittee utilise annual external events such as Children's Week, Early Learning Matters, and NAIDOC Week to connect with school communities around a theme and to leverage the wider exposure and interest.



FINANCE REPORT

Income

Council is grateful to the Education Directorate for a substantial grant of \$225,780.02 (\$248,358.02 including GST) to carry out the important work of supporting P&Cs, providing parent perspectives and representatives and promoting parent engagement for the 2021-22 period.

Council sources additional income from one-off grants and modest membership fees.

In 2021-22 Council received a significant boost to income via \$40,000 in Government stimulus funding. Other increases to income include a \$7441 grant to assist Council purchase technology to effectively work virtually and remotely, and a Children's week grant of \$1000, which Council matched to fund 10 P&Cs undertaking a thrifty parent engagement welcome activity.

Income from member fees was \$41,445.57.

Expenses

Council expenses for the 2021-22 financial year tracked similarly to 2020-21, with the most significant expense being wages. Rising wage costs and increased demand for staff time, above and beyond our regular office hours, resulted in a steep increase to expenses.

Despite an increase to wages, all Council expenditure is consistent with the values and goals outlined in our strategic plan. Which is consistent and complimentary to the objectives of the ACT Education Directorate Deed of Grant.

Expenses are detailed in the attached financial statements.

Financial position

Council finished the 2021-22 financial year with a surplus of \$14,044.22. This is due to the additional Government stimulus funding noted above.

This additional funding offset significant increases to wage costs as well as increased staff time outside regular office hours.





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26 July 2022

Mr Terry L Sanders
Executive Officer
ACT Council of Parents & Citizen Associations
Canberra

Sent via email: tsanders@actparents.org.au

Tailored Accounts Independent Audit Report to the members of ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations

Reference: A. The Accounts Review Service Engagement

Dear Terry,

I have audited the accompanying financial statements of the ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations, which comprises the statement of Balance Sheet as at **30 June 2022** and the Statement of surplus or loss for the year ended **30 June 2022**.

Committees' Responsibility for the Financial Report

The P&C committee is responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view of the financial state of the Council.

Responsibility of person conducting audit

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on my audit. An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion

Independence

I confirm that I am not a member of the ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations and am not related to any member of their committee.

Opinion

I have audited the attached financial statements of the Council.

- a) It is of my expert opinion that the financial statements of the Council are properly drawn up;



So far as to give a true and fair view of the matters required by subsection 72(2) of the Act to be dealt with in the accounts for the financial year reported on; In accordance with the provisions of the Act;

- b) Proper accounting and other records have been kept by the Council
- c) The audit was conducted in accordance with the rules of the Council.

Should you have any enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,



Harry Hoang
Chief Executive Officer
Tailored Accounts



Profit & Loss Statement

July 2021 To June 2022

ABN: 53 870 517 949

Email: tsanders@actparents.org.au

Income		
Grant Income		\$225,780.02
Grant One Off		\$8,441.00
Bank Interest		\$724.73
Advertising (ParentAction)		\$1,020.00
Insurance Rebate		\$4,192.15
Govt Stimulus		\$40,000.00
Memberships		
High Schools & Colleges	\$6,474.23	
Primary Schools	\$28,867.37	
Pre-Schools	\$3,629.00	
Special Schools	\$279.30	
Annual Set Fee	\$2,195.67	
Total Memberships		\$41,445.57
Total Income		\$321,603.47
Gross Profit		\$321,603.47
Expenses		
General Expenses		
Audit/Accounting (MYOB)	\$2,075.44	
Advertising & Marketing	\$113.79	
Affiliation Fees	\$3,000.00	
Bank Fees	\$40.75	
Bookkeeping	\$6,285.00	
Contingency	\$2,073.02	
Dues & Subscriptions	\$2,146.30	
Equipment Maintenance/Software	\$7,627.28	
Internet & Web Development	\$1,387.24	
Insurance	\$1,100.00	
Meetings	\$61.89	
Photocopying	\$262.78	
Printing ParentAction	\$1,117.04	
Projects	\$255.00	
Rent	\$8,564.89	
Stationery & Office Supplies	\$402.41	
Telephone Expenses	\$1,037.09	
Total General Expenses		\$37,549.92
Payroll Expenses		
Wages & Salaries	\$238,708.93	
Superannuation	\$24,487.12	
Workers Comp Insurance	\$1,280.10	
Staff & Member Training	\$820.86	
Provision for LSL	\$4,712.32	
Total Payroll Expenses		\$270,009.33
Total Expenses		\$307,559.25
Operating Profit		\$14,044.22
Net Profit/(Loss)		\$14,044.22

This report includes Year-End Adjustments.

Balance Sheet

As of June 2022

ABN: 53 870 517 949

Email: tsanders@actparents.org.au

Assets		
Current Assets		
Bank Accounts		
Operating Account	\$12,523.83	
Online Saver	\$63,067.07	
TD 50166831 4/9/22	\$100,000.00	
TD 50171104	\$50,304.05	
TD 50315391	\$50,000.00	
TD 50141803	\$16,177.88	
TD 50172247	\$5,000.00	
Petty Cash	\$14.15	
Total Bank Accounts		\$297,086.98
Other Current Assets		
Accrued Income	\$416.34	
Total Other Current Assets		\$416.34
Total Current Assets		\$297,503.32
Non-Current Assets		
Office Equipment		
Office Equipment At Cost	\$8,809.04	
Accum. Depr. Office Equipment	-\$8,809.04	
Total Office Equipment		\$0.00
Total Non-Current Assets		\$0.00
Total Assets		\$297,503.32
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Credit Cards		
C'wealt Mastercard	\$2,355.98	
Total Credit Cards		\$2,355.98
Tax Liabilities		
GST Collected	-\$0.39	
GST Paid	\$0.77	
Total Tax Liabilities		\$0.38
Other Current Liabilities		
Trade Creditors	\$14,532.00	
Grant in Advance	\$3,000.00	
Accrued Expenses	\$900.00	
Auspiced Funds LGC P&C	\$7,026.88	
Total Other Current Liabilities		\$25,458.88
Payroll Liabilities		
Long Service Leave	\$12,542.00	
Total Payroll Liabilities		\$12,542.00
Total Current Liabilities		\$40,357.24
Total Liabilities		\$40,357.24
Net Assets		\$257,146.08
Equity		
Retained Earnings		\$243,101.86
Current Year Surplus/Deficit		\$14,044.22
Total Equity		\$257,146.08

This report includes Year-End Adjustments.

Balance Sheet

As of June 2022

ABN: 53 870 517 949

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This report includes Year-End Adjustments.



**ACT Council of
Parents & Citizens
Associations**

The parent voice on public education

