



ParentACTion

The parent voice on public education

Term 1, 2017

ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations

Keep calm and plan now!

It is easy for P&C office bearers to take on too much, struggle with too few volunteers and then feel burnt out at the end of year. The best way to avoid this is to begin planning now.

Shared goals

The community is much more likely to support your events and efforts if you have a clear aim. For example, link fundraisers with a much needed or appreciated purchase for the school and make the aim of community events clear. Try to involve the school community in decisions about priorities and work in with the school board's plans.

Schedule activities

Now is the time to identify the P&C's major activities for the whole year and when they will happen. Include a good mix – fundraising events (the fete, a movie night or trivia evening), community events (an end of year BBQ) and take-home fundraisers (selling plants or mangoes) – spread evenly through the year. Work with the principal to avoid clashes with school events and busy times.

Break it down

Breaking down big activities into smaller, more manageable tasks takes some work and planning now, but it will make it much easier to get other people to help. If someone has never helped with a P&C event before, taking on a fundraiser or



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From the President



John Haydon

This year my daughter is transitioning from primary to high school and I'd like to congratulate the school on how well thought-out the whole process is and how well focused it is on the needs of the students in what could otherwise be a stressful change. I hope every ACT high school does it as well.

But amongst this ray of sunshine it appears that Australia's education system is going backwards, at least as measured by international tests like PISA (OECD Programme for International Student Assessment). Not only are many countries moving ahead of Australia but by some measures our current students are doing less well than their predecessors. An article by Kelsey Munro published in The Canberra Times struck me as a good analysis of why this might be occurring.

We know that the value parents put on education strongly influences how well their children do at school. If parents are now too busy or less capable of engaging with their children's education, leaving the schools to do more 'parenting', that might explain Australia's worsening performance.

Maybe kids are different now. Perhaps our current crop of 15 year olds are less inclined to make the effort to do well in an anonymous test like PISA than less free-thinking, less self-focused earlier cohorts. One obvious difference which may not yet have made its way to the same degree to some competitor countries is the ubiquity of smartphones and social media apps. This might be re-wiring their plastic brains away from concentration and problem solving towards being continually distracted.

Maybe international comparisons don't compare like with like? Unlike countries with no immigration, we have students from all over the world with very different learning styles and do not have the culture of compliance found in East Asia, nor the extensive tutoring found there.

Maybe our teachers are the problem. Federal Education Minister Birmingham claims that the single greatest in-school factor contributing to student accomplishment is the teacher. Perhaps they are not teaching as well as they used to. One study claims we draw our teachers from the middle third of university graduates versus the top 10 percent in Finland and South Korea. Also, because of a shortage of teachers in some subjects (such as maths), many teachers are working out of their area of expertise.

Our education funding is certainly misdirected with some rich private schools massively overfunded. Lavish sports grounds for private schools do nothing for the country's academic score sheet and it is particularly unjust when the great bulk of students with extra needs (children with disabilities, those from non-English speaking or low socio-economic backgrounds and our indigenous children) go to public schools which are not resourced to provide the extra attention they require.

Our system is also very unequal. It is high quality and high equity systems that do best in the world. Considering socio-economic status, in Australia the bottom 25 percent of 15 year olds are three years behind the top 25 percent. Contrast this with Japan, Hong Kong and Estonia where the most disadvantaged students do as well as the average student in the OECD. While this applies less in the ACT, where there is disadvantage but it is spread thinly throughout the Territory, Australia has by some analyses the largest concentration of disadvantaged students in disadvantaged schools. These schools need very extensive additional resources to reduce entrenched disadvantage.

But we are not actually doing that badly against other countries even if our decline against our own results of 15 years ago is a concern. With the exceptions of Canada and New Zealand most of the countries ahead of us are monocultures like Singapore, Hong Kong and Finland. There are a lot more challenges in educating a diverse country like Australia. ●

Need help running the P&C?

Our workshops are here for you!

Each year we run a series of workshops to help you as a P&C member to make the most of your role and improve the way your association runs. As well as our usual effective P&C training and treasurer training, this year we are running a new workshop focusing on your constitution and how to amend it.

The sessions are free and refreshments are provided.

Effective P&C Workshop

Thursday March 30 at 6:30pm

Repeated Saturday April 1 at 2pm

Covering ways to improve how your association works, recruiting volunteers, fundraising and the P&C as an employer, this workshop is for new P&C members and continuing officers alike. Presidents will find the workshops particularly useful, but any P&C member is welcome. We will look at the role of P&Cs and Council, how to improve your meetings and much more. Plenty of time is allowed for your questions.

The workshop is divided into four 40-minute modules, each focusing on a different aspect. You can attend for individual modules if you wish. Details of the modules are in the *Training* section of our website.

Treasurers' and Insurance workshop

Thursday April 6 at 7pm

Experienced treasurers and Council's bookkeeper will provide information and answer questions on keeping financial records, annual reports, audits, employing staff, handling monies, taxation and more. All treasurers are strongly encouraged to attend.

The two-and-a-half hour workshop also examines the insurance package available for P&C associations through Council and how to complete the paperwork.

NEW! P&C Constitution Workshop

Thursday May 4 at 7pm

Your P&C's constitution is an important document and should guide the operation of your association. However, many committees find that their constitution is out of date, no longer reflects current practice and may not comply with the model structure.

This two hour, hands-on workshop is designed to help P&Cs review, rewrite or amend their constitutions. Participants can bring their own P&C constitution so we can work through the specific content and wording needed.

We'll look at the model rules, the Associations Act, Council's sample P&C constitution and the process of passing an amended constitution through your P&C. We'll also consider By Laws.

P&C presidents and secretaries should attend but any P&C member is welcome.

Register your attendance

For venues or more information on any of our workshops see the *Training* section of our website. To book your attendance, please email contact@actparents.org.au or call 6241 5759. •

“ Very knowledgeable presenters. A very useful workshop and well paced. Thank you! ”

– 2016 Effective P&C Workshop participant

First steps for new Office Bearers

So, you're the new president, secretary, treasurer? What are your first steps?

1. Let us know who you are so we can help you—our members! Simply complete our online Office Bearers Form:
www.surveymonkey.com/r/OfficeBearers
2. Check out our online resources, including a To Do list to complete after your AGM:
www.actparents.org.au
3. Attend one of our workshops!

Keep calm and plan now!

continued from front page

event can be very daunting and most people will baulk at the size of the task and the time commitment needed. If, however, you approach parents with smaller tasks, you should have more luck in securing new volunteers to take on a piece of the project. So instead of asking for someone to organise the movie night, you're looking for people to each take on a small task – decorating the hall, advertising, ticketing, catering, licensing for the movie and so on.

Be specific

The more specific you can be about a task, the better. Some people will have the skills to pick up a task like advertising the movie night and run with it, but you're more likely to find someone to take it on if you specify what is needed – a flyer to send home with students and some posters to hang around the school. It's even better if you can provide a copy of the ones from last year to use as a template, or similar resources.

Give a loooong lead-time

Even if your movie night is not until term three, ask people to sign up for one of your small tasks *now*. “Could you arrange posters and flyers for the movie night in term three” is a much more likely to be met with a “yes” if you ask now than if you wait until two weeks before the event!

Bring in the volunteers!

The best way to ask people to take on your neatly bundled tasks is face-to-face, so do ask parents you see at the school gate, those who come to school events and people who come to P&C meetings. More than likely, though, you'll have to supplement this with notices in your school newsletter, emails to parents and carers and calls for help on any social media your P&C runs. You could try a carefully crafted note home, which asks families to commit to ‘just one thing’ this year, with each task listed next to check-boxes.



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.

Contact Actsmart today to find out we can help your public event.

- ☎ 13 22 81 (Access Canberra)
- ✉ actsmartbusiness@act.gov.au
- 🖱 actsmart.act.gov.au



actsmart
public event
recycling energy water

Look after your volunteers

If you've attracted some new volunteers, make sure you look after them so that they come back to help again!

- Make sure it is clear what to do and how to do it.
- Don't ask for more than they have committed to. No one likes turning up to cook sausages for a one-hour slot, and then getting trapped there for hours.
- Ensure everyone has something to do so that volunteers feel that their time is valued, even if it means doing less yourself.
- Be patient. Volunteers are not necessarily skilled experts.
- Be friendly and welcoming. Resist the natural tendency to only chat with people you already know.
- Provide the opportunity for making contact with other volunteers by introducing people doing related tasks or rostering people in pairs.
- Listen to your volunteers' feedback and suggestions for the future.
- Thank everyone profusely, specifically and publicly.

Celebrate your success

Once each event is over, thank everyone for their input and let the community know how successful it was. This might be how much money was raised, photographs of equipment purchased with the funds raised, or just how much fun everyone had at the event. You may want to hold a volunteers' prize draw where everyone who helped has a shot at winning a gift (it doesn't have to be big) or even a party or morning tea for all the helpers.

Help is available

Good luck with the year ahead, but do remember that you are not alone. Council has a range of resources to help P&C office bearers (see www.actparents.org.au) and you can contact our office for help and advice.

The Fundraising Directory also has a pile of great ideas as well as resources, templates and spreadsheets to help you plan events.

See www.fundraisingdirectory.com.au and www.fetesandfestivals.com.au. •

Meet our new Policy Officer

Council is pleased to welcome a new Policy Officer — Veronica Elliott — to our office team after Maclaren Wall left the position last year. Veronica is keen to introduce herself to all our members.

I am a mum of three children aged seven, nine and eleven, all attending the local public school. Since beginning their education I have gained experience and understanding of the many issues faced by families and schools. I have actively supported our school community, from helping out in the classroom to organising events and recruiting volunteers. In a more formal capacity I

have been vice-president of my school P&C for two years, where more complex issues were faced, requiring the assistance of industrial relations specialists and lawyers. In 2015, I decided to return to study a Bachelor of Laws, which I am currently completing part-time.

I am confident that my experience as a parent, as vice-president of the P&C and as a Law student will assist me in the role of Policy Officer. I look forward to working with the Executive Committee and P&Cs, so that together we can improve our schools for all children. •

Actsmart Schools for sustainability

It's smart thinking to have schools sign up to sustainability. It saves money and supports the environment. Jenny Dibley, Manager of the Schools Unit at ACT Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development explains how the Actsmart Schools program helps schools become more sustainable.

All ACT schools are registered with Actsmart Schools (formerly known as AuSSI). The program has an accreditation scheme to recognise and reward schools for their efforts.

Students leading the way

As more schools gain accreditation in the program's five focus areas (energy, waste, water, school grounds/biodiversity, curriculum), it is overwhelmingly evident that schools with an active student team are more likely to gain accreditation. In response, an education officer has been engaged to help schools establish student teams.

The focus of Actsmart Schools has shifted from relying on teachers to drive the program to students playing a greater role. Students are developing the knowledge, skills and understanding to lead sustainability in their school by attending workshops for teachers, business and office managers. Each workshop has a session where students are withdrawn to discuss the challenges and issues they face in getting the whole school actively engaged.

Touring successful schools

A recent Actsmart Schools Eco Bus Tour attracted 120 students from various ACT schools. The students visited schools that demonstrate excellence in sustainability education.

Resources available

Actsmart Schools has developed several new resources this year including extra interactive waste displays for schools to borrow and a waste and recycling card game (published and distributed to all ACT primary schools).

Resources have also been developed to support student teams working on the program. For example, a student energy kit is available. It contains quizzes to use at school assemblies, a PowerMate for measuring electricity use, posters,

stickers and consumption monitoring sheets as well as capes and masks so that members of the student team can become sustainability superheroes! The role of the team is to engage the whole school in reducing consumption – and make it fun!

In addition, the program offers schools the free services of a Waste and Energy Education Officer and a Horticulturist.

Training for teachers

Actsmart Schools provides accredited professional learning for ACT teachers. An Environment Centre/Area Teachers' Network supports teachers who oversee the program so they feel less isolated in their role. The network meets quarterly and is invaluable and productive, generating resources, ideas and curriculum materials.

Actsmart Schools continues to work collaboratively with ACT Education to assist 10 schools to move towards carbon neutrality. •

Case Study: Maribyrnong Power Rangers

At Maribyrnong Primary, student team members, donning their capes and masks, are known as 'Power Rangers'. They monitor power and water use and suggest ways the school can improve. They also create awareness across the school about the impact of energy use.

The Actsmart Schools program has led to weekly waste-free lunches and recycling stations in each unit. Vegetable gardens, worm farms, compost bins and a frog pond have been established, rainwater tanks installed and bird boxes created by students now adorn the playground.

ACT: Australia's best schools?

Council's Policy Officer, Veronica Elliott, looks behind the headlines boasting that ACT schools out-score other states on NAPLAN tests. But if ours are not the country's best schools, how can Council – with your help – make them better?

At first glance, ACT students collectively achieve NAPLAN results well above the national average. These results are released by Ministers with a great sense of satisfaction. So it would follow that many believe the ACT to have Australia's best schools. But the ACT is an unusual place. Our lack of regional and rural areas, very well educated population and relatively high socio-economic status all make doing well on NAPLAN an expectation rather than an achievement.

Trevor Cobbold, Convenor of Save Our Schools and former Productivity Commissioner, has carefully analysed ACT NAPLAN results and found a worrying disparity between the achievement of students from disadvantaged and advantaged backgrounds.

ACT results from 2015 show that over a quarter of year nine students with minimally educated parents and over 40% of Indigenous students did not achieve the *minimum* national writing standard. In spelling, grammar, punctuation, reading and numeracy, between 13 and 20% of disadvantaged year nine students failed to achieve the minimum standards. The gap in performance between students from disadvantaged and advantaged backgrounds is large. It equates to Indigenous students being three-and-a-half to four years behind their peers and students of parents with minimal education lagging by two to three years of schooling.

The analysis also shows a blatant disparity in funding, clearly supporting already advantaged students. Indigenous, disability and students from low socio-economic status families make up 19% of public school enrolments, compared with only 8% of Catholic and 7% of independent school enrolments. Yet remarkably, in 2013, Independent schools received the most overall support at \$17,646 (per student income) despite educating the smallest proportion of

disadvantaged students, while public school income was \$14,794 per student and Catholic schools \$11,998. The analysis shows that calls from private school lobbyists for equal government funding of students in public and private schools (a voucher-style system) would further exacerbate current inequity and the under-achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students. So, how to address the inequity in ACT schools?

Council is committed to ensuring that public schools deliver great education to all students, irrespective of their background. We have been briefed on how the ACT Education Directorate is implementing funding measures under the Gonski agreement to ensure that funds allocated to disadvantaged students are used appropriately, without creating greater administrative burden for school leaders. The question is, how does one create flexibility to allow for the particular needs of the school and at the same time account to the community to ensure that 'targeted funds' to combat inequity reach the intended recipients, and whether that is the best use of funds?

Council will continue to explore these and other important questions through our regular meetings with the ACT Minister for Education, senior staff at the Education Directorate and the Shadow Minister for Education.

Remember that we are *your* Council, representing P&C associations within the ACT and providing a voice for our members. The Council Executive are elected from Council Delegates – one or two from each school P&C – who have been elected to represent the school at Council. So get involved! Join us for our next General Meeting, Tuesday February 28 (see back page) where you will find a supportive environment to raise and discuss issues.

When members bring issues to Council, we may advocate for change to improve our schools. Some of the issues Council is currently exploring include: the management of unreasonable or violent conduct, ensuring election commitments are kept, and the need for common reporting requirements in all schools (including private). •

**RIDE or
WALK**
to school



Together we can move a generation!

Thank you to the principals, teachers, families and most importantly the 22,000 students from 58 schools across Canberra, who participated in the Ride or Walk to School program during 2016!

Kids need at least 60 minutes of activity every day and riding or walking (or skating, scooting and skipping!) are great ways to incorporate this physical activity into a child's day. With really great school community support and commitment, the Ride or Walk to School program has developed the skills and confidence of our kids and helped them develop healthy habits for life.

We're recruiting for 2017 now – if you'd like your school to join this fun, free and interactive program, contact us to register your interest.

Contact us today info@paf.org.au or 6162 2820 | paf.org.au

Thanks to all of you for helping to move a generation

Ainslie School, Amaroo School, Aranda Primary, Arawang Primary, Black Mountain School, Bonython Primary, Brindabella Christian College Charnwood and Lyneham, Calwell Primary, Canberra Montessori, Caroline Chisholm, Chapman Primary, Charles Conder Primary, Charnwood Dunlop Primary, Curtin Primary, Evatt Primary, Farrer Primary, Forrest Primary, Franklin Early Childhood School, Fraser Primary, Galilee School, Gilmore Primary, Giralang Primary, Good Shepherd Primary, Gordon Primary, Harrison School, Holy Trinity Primary, Hughes Primary, Isabella Plains Early Childhood School, Jervis Bay Primary, Kingsford Smith School, Latham Primary, Lyneham Primary, Macgregor Primary, Macquarie Primary, Maribyrnong Primary, Melrose High, Miles Franklin Primary, Monash Primary, Mother Teresa Primary, Mount Rogers Primary, Namadgi School, Neville Bonner Primary, Ngannawal Primary, Palmerston District Primary School, Red Hill School, Richardson Primary, Rosary Primary, Sacred Heart Primary, Southern Cross Early Childhood School, St Anthony's Primary, St Thomas More Primary, St Vincents Primary, Taylor Primary, UC High Kaleen, Wanniasa School, Weetangera Primary, The Woden School



**RIDE or
WALK**
to school



**Physical Activity
Foundation**

This program contributes to the ACT Government's Healthy Weight Initiative. It is implemented in schools by the Physical Activity Foundation and supported by ACT Health.

Time for a better start

Modern living has not been good for many of our children but communities can turn it around, writes Professor Tom Cochrane of the University of Canberra.

Recent research from the University of Canberra, involving measurements of almost 22,000 ACT primary school children who participated in the *SmartStart for Kids* programme, showed that 69% of children had low general fitness and a quarter were either overweight or obese. On a more positive note, closer inspection of that same data showed that the majority of overweight children could achieve normal weight with just an extra 15 minutes of physical activity a day and dietary intake restriction equivalent to around two squares of chocolate per day. In addition, general fitness levels could be improved through a wide range of physical activities such as those that might be gained through active play and active travel to or from school.

These data are backed up by the findings from the Canberra-based Lifestyle of our Kids study that examined the influence of specialist PE in 853 Canberra school children from when they were eight until 12 years of age. This study showed that, overall, 31% of boys and just 16% of girls met the national guideline of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day.

Alongside these declines in physical abilities and increases in excess body weight, children's social skills (evidenced by, for example, the *Buddy Bench* campaign in ACT primary schools) and psychological resilience (evidenced by the increasing number of children and young people who have a mental health treatment plan) have also been noticeably in decline.

Challenge to parents and communities

These findings throw down a challenge to us as a society to do better for our children. In essence, this means that we need to reconfigure our environments and lifestyles for children such that there are adequate opportunities for *all* children to be physically active daily, to interact socially more often and with fewer opportunities to consume excess calories.

What can parents and carers do?

Increasingly, the demands of the workforce on parents and carers have made the challenge of providing active and social opportunities for children more challenging. A greater proportion of children's time is spent in sedentary, often solitary, activities, usually in front of a TV screen, mobile device or a games terminal. The natural consequences of this change in lifestyle are: loss of social and psychological skills; decline in general fitness; and gradual increase in excess body weight. Parents and carers should become more engaged with these challenges, advocate for and, where feasible, support change for a better future for our children.

How to get involved in shaping change

The University of Canberra's Health Research Institute in collaboration with the Urban Synergies Group is holding a forum on March 8 - *Shaping Spaces for Gen-Z* - which will focus on how as communities we can create environments that foster healthy childhood development in the broadest sense of this term, including mental and physical abilities, social and psychological skills, connectedness to community and maintaining a healthy body weight.

Specific objectives of the forum are:

- to bring together a wide range of key stakeholders
- to discuss potential future approaches and the balance of opportunities available to children and to empower children and families in shaping change
- to test new approaches to decision making on issues that affect the whole community
- to identify and agree tangible actions that may achieve healthier environments for kids.

Register for the Forum on Eventbrite: www.eventbrite.com.au/e/shaping-spaces-for-gen-z-international-forum-tickets-28446290621

It is free for P&C members to attend but please register for catering and attendance numbers purposes. ●

At our P&C...

How can you get more parents involved? It's a perennial question. We took a look at a friendly approach that is working at Fraser Primary.

Two years ago Fraser Primary Principal, Sue Norton, was looking for ways to involve more of the parent community in the school. Her new initiative – one that is still going strong today – was 'Fraser Friends'.

"Fraser Friends is basically a fun version of the P&C meeting," explains Alois Tusch, the school's P&C President, "without the reports and formalities."

"The Friends meet on the same day as the P&C meeting. Sue gives her Principal's report, just as she would at a regular P&C meeting, and then there is a chance for parents and carers to flag issues, raise problems and ask questions."

Council's surveys of P&Cs in the past have shown that what people value most about being on the P&C is being informed about what happens at school and connecting to school staff, especially the principal. In effect, the Friends meetings make these most valuable aspects of the Fraser P&C meetings available to a greater number of people.

"Toddlers and babies are welcome and toys are available for them to play with. The meetings are



Image: 'Love my tea' by Jimmy and Sasha Reade www.flickr.com/photos/readephotography

***Love an informal P&C meeting and a cuppa?
That's Fraser Friends.***

held around 9am, straight after school drop-off, so it suits different people to those who come to our evening meetings," says Alois.

"It's a beautiful addition to our P&C and a lot of good ideas come out of it! As P&C President, I try to get along as often as I can and often matters raised at the Friends meetings are then brought to the P&C."

For Sue, the meetings are a valuable way of capturing the input of as many people and as many points of view as possible. "It's a place to talk about the vision of the school and a forum for ideas, a way for parents to know what is happening and to get involved in decision making at the school."

"I get feedback on initiatives that we are considering and a lot of new ideas too. Because of the informal setting, parents don't feel bashful about asking what might feel like a silly question – questions they might not feel they can ask at a formal P&C meeting."

According to Sue, attendance at Fraser Friends varies from as few as three to as many as 20 people. "It is about building confidence. After a while, the people who came started to run things. One parent ran a movie night, another organised school celebrations of World Teacher Day."

When asked if effectively having two P&C meetings was a valuable use of her time, Sue says a definite 'yes'.

Keep in touch via social media

Facebook user? Twitter fan?

Follow Council on Facebook (ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations) or Twitter (@ParentVoiceACT) for P&C updates, tips, reminders, and interesting news for parents.

Considered our 'Most Useful' information source by our followers!

If your P&C has a social media presence, please link up with us to make it easier to share information.

“Many of the school’s best new initiatives have come from our discussions at Fraser Friends. I value our conversations and those parents feel valued.” •

Recycling freebies

continued from back page

At other schools, a variety of interesting objects obtained from The Green Shed have been used for ‘loose-parts play’ for juniors, where children engage with everyday materials that can be moved, carried, combined, repurposed and redesigned, taken apart and put together in endless ways.

Of course, in using items from The Green Shed, schools are not only inspiring creativity, but also reducing waste going to landfill.

P&Cs may also find The Green Shed a source of useful supplies such as plant pots for the annual plant store. Items from the Green Shed could also be used to spruce up your canteen area, such as using old doors as screens or dividers. More about using recycled materials in a canteen facelift can be found at www.health.act.gov.au/itsyourmove.

Low-cost items can be obtained for no charge by schools and teachers – simply take along some form of school identification (such as a letter on letterhead). The Green Shed has no ability to reserve or collect items, however, so what you see is what you get and several trips may be necessary to secure your wished-for repurposeable treasure.

A new project at the Green Shed – Project Green Seed – is looking to help teachers further by providing practical support with waste management units within the syllabus. They now have a dedicated, qualified educator-artist available for either consultation or to visit classrooms and run workshops with children using items collected at The Shed. •

About us

ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations is the peak body for Parents & Citizens (P&C) Associations in the ACT.

We represent over 60,000 parents and carers in 86 ACT public schools.

About our magazine

ParentACTion is a free journal published four times a year. It is available online, plus hardcopies are provided to all ACT public school P&Cs and school boards, the ACT Legislative Assembly, senior ACT Education Directorate staff, public education organisations, the media and interstate parent associations.

Contributions, advertising and feedback are always being sought. Contributions can be emailed directly to 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 Executive

President:	John Haydon
Vice President:	Kirsty McGovern-Hooley
Secretary:	Cecilia Shlegel
Treasurer:	Vacant
Committee:	Andrew Bidwell, Sharon Ding, Joanne Forster, Xiaoyan Lu, Adam Miller, Vivienne Pearce.

Life members

Grant Battersby, Pam Cahir, Trevor Cobbold, Graeme Evans, Joan Kellett, Ian Morgan, Richard Scherer.

Contact us

ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations

Maitland House
100 Maitland Street
Hackett ACT 2602

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

Office staff

Executive Officer:	Terry Sanders
Policy Officer:	Veronica Elliott
Communications Officer:	Janelle Kennard
Executive Assistant:	Rachel McGrath

Office hours

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

Dates to remember

Feb 28 Council General Meeting
7.00pm - 9.30pm
Centre for Teaching and Learning
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling

March 28 Council Hot Topics/General Meeting
7.00pm - 9.30pm
Centre for Teaching and Learning
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling

March 30 Effective P&C Workshop
6.30pm - 9.00pm
Centre for Teaching and Learning
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling

April 1 Effective P&C Workshop (repeat)
2.00pm - 4.30pm
Maitland House
100 Maitland Street, Hackett

April 6 Treasurers & Insurance Workshop
7.00pm - 9.30pm
Centre for Teaching and Learning
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling

April 8-25 Council office closed for term break

May 4 P&C Constitution Workshop
7.00pm - 9.00pm
Centre for Teaching and Learning
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling

Recycling freebies

Most of us know of The Green Shed as a great place to drop off unwanted goods when our cupboards get too full, but did you know that for schools, the Shed offers free items for students to create with, upcycle or explore?

The Green Shed, at both Mitchell and Symonston resource management centres, is an ACT Government re-use and recycling facility where second hand items can be dropped off to be purchased and used by others. For schools and teachers The Green Shed offers a huge range of recycled materials for school and classroom projects such as craft materials and outdoor supplies. There are also mechanical and electrical items which can be de-constructed by students to find out how things work.

Turner Primary School's art teacher sourced beads and jewellery from The Green Shed for students to make spectacular art works.

Angela Burroughs, teacher at Ainslie Primary, sourced bike parts and bikes in need of repair from The Green Shed to keep a group of students engaged. With the help of a community member, she founded a once a week group which repaired bikes from spare parts, rehabilitated old ones, and even created some amazingly modified transport. The group, dubbed "bicycle therapy"



Fun bike creations made by Ainslie students using items sourced from The Green Shed.

by the students involved, was a vehicle for teaching literacy to students who had previously been disengaged.

"It was the highlight of their week," Angela said. But the group needed a supply of bike parts. "We went on an excursion to The Green Shed to get more parts and bikes." Apart from repairing student bikes, eventually some of the repaired bike were also sold at the school fete.

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