



Caring for early learning

We are pleased to announce the merger of the Canberra Preschool Society with Council, giving us — together — a renewed focus on early childhood education, and greater resources to support and advocate for parents of Canberra's youngest kids.

In a move reflecting the trend of Preschool Parent Associations becoming sub-committees of their local primary school P&C, the Canberra Preschool Society (CPS) merged with P&C Council in July this year. This is an opportunity for each organisation to leverage off the other's resources, networks and expertise to strengthen the voice of parents of preschool children in the ACT, while also making the most effective use of ACT Government funding to support the Directorate's vision for early years learning.

The functions and services of CPS have been absorbed by Council and are being executed by a newly-formed Early Learning Committee. The Early Learning Committee will provide a targeted approach to support parents to have an active role in their child's learning at home and at school from an early age. The merger means we can add more value to what we do while working to ensure we maintain the clear and independent voice for the concerns of preschools and preschool families that CPS has developed over the years.

Early Years Learning is a focus for the ACT Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Yvette Berry MLA. Our Early Learning Committee will provide a forum for families whose children are attending, or about to

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The CPS story starts in 1943 when they advocated for Canberra's first preschools.

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From the President



Kirsty McGovern-Hooley

We are very pleased to announce a merger of Council with our friends at the Canberra Preschool Society. Welcome to all our new members from Preschool Parent Associations and Playschool Committees. The merger enables us to strengthen our approach to school advocacy for early learning years, and provides additional support and resources to Preschool and Playschool Associations in the ACT.

We would like to invite our new members, and interested delegates and representatives from all P&Cs, to the inaugural meeting of our Early Learning Committee at 7pm on 12 September at our Hackett office. This Committee will focus on supporting parents to have an active role in their child's schooling. It will provide information, training and support services through Council office staff, to all preschool and early childhood members of Council.

If you have questions about the merger, see the new 'Early Learning' section of our website for FAQ and more.

We take our role as the 'parent voice on public education' seriously and have recently been gathering your views on a number of issues...

NAPLAN Inquiry: We had a great exchange of views at our last general meeting, with the Minister for Education in attendance, which informed our written submission to an ACT Government inquiry into standardised testing. You told us that most parents (about 75%) value some form of standardised testing, but almost no one wanted to keep NAPLAN in its current form, and there was strong support for a review of NAPLAN. Our Facebook poll also yielded some interesting insights, with very few parents considering NAPLAN results when selecting schools.

Changes to Transport Canberra bus services: We have sought feedback from our members through email and social media and would like to thank all the parents who have

contributed. Our office has developed a detailed written submission outlining issues generally and with specific schools. We have let Transport Canberra know and will continue to reflect your concerns and propose solutions to both Education and Transport Canberra.

Listening to Tuggeranong: Our next general meeting will be held on 28 August at Caroline Chisholm School's Centre for Innovation and Learning. We hope to hear a broad range of parents views on public schools in Tuggeranong. We will use this to represent your views to ACT's education decision makers in our regular meetings with the Minister and senior staff at the Directorate, and address issues specific to "Southside".

Disability transport and the NDIS: Our Disability Education Working Group also met to discuss preparation of a submission to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) regarding a proposed policy for the NDIA to take over responsibility for transport to and from school for students with disabilities.

Legislative Review of the ACT Education Act: The Education Directorate is undertaking a legislative review, and we have been providing feedback, comments and input into the early stages of this work.

There is a lot more to come. Apart from embedding early learning as a key focus area for Council and continuing to provide parent feedback in many areas, we are progressing our Violence in Schools project; keeping up to date with capacity planning and the building of new schools in Gunghalin; providing feedback on a review of the Policy on Suspensions, Transfers and Exclusions; and talking to decision makers about support for Gifted and Talented students.

If you have something you'd like to share with us about your school, please come along to a meeting or get in contact with us via Facebook, email or phone. You are welcome to attend any of our general meetings, subcommittees or working groups. We are here to listen. ●

Canteen 'champion' recognised

In May, one school volunteer was celebrated as a true friend of public education.

Parent associations may be struggling to find the *number* of volunteers they need, but in virtually every school you'll find at least one absolute champion. You know – the volunteer who is always there with willing hands, who seems to live and breathe the place.

Bev Crittall is one of those champions. Last term, her contribution was recognised with a 'Friend of Public Education Award'. The award was presented by the Australian Education Union (AEU) as part of Public Education Week.

Bev is a full-time volunteer at the Garran Primary School canteen, working the same hours as the canteen manager. She is also available to help with guided reading and math sessions.

She was somewhat embarrassed to receive the award. "I do what I do because I get more from it than I put in. I'm happy to just do it in the background."

Like many school canteens, Garran's is at the centre of the school community. And like many canteen staff and volunteers, Bev plays a nurturing role in the school community – helping make sure that people feel they belong. She knows the names of all the students and greets every child, parent and staff member with a smile. Students and staff love the canteen, not just for the food, but for the individual attention, banter and jokes.

The Garran canteen – named by the students "Garralicious" – has been transformed over the last two years, driven by the paid manager and Bev as fulltime volunteer. Parents, students and staff are happy to order several times a week, knowing the food is homemade and healthy. There is a colourful and diverse menu and everyone is encouraged to sample a range of fruit and vegetables. The canteen was recently awarded a Healthy Food at School Canteen Menu Award from Nutrition Australia.

When staff order from the canteen, it's Bev who dresses their plates and writes them special notes



Bev receiving her award from Jenny Murray (from First State Super, who sponsored the award) and AEU Federal President Corenna Haythorpe.

and acknowledges their birthdays. Bev goes out of her way to acknowledge all staff during special events in their lives, be it the death of a family member or the birth of a child.

She decorates the canteen to reflect the many festivals that the school's diverse community celebrate. She also reinforces the school's 'Bounce Back' student wellbeing and resilience program with posters and sayings. This supports the work of the teachers in the classroom.

Bev, through the canteen, sets the tone for the community feel and connectedness at Garran Primary. It is people like Bev, passionate supporters of public schools, that give our system richness and strength. She is certainly a worthy winner of this award.

"The principal comes in and says how much they appreciate what we do," Bev told us. "That is more valuable than a public award. People in our community recognise me and value what we do. I get to know the teachers and the kids and watch them grow. Parents come and have a chat and a cuppa. That's all the thanks I need." ●

Caring for early learning

Continued from front page

attend, a playschool or preschool in the ACT. It will provide information, training and support services through the Council office to all preschool and early childhood members of Council.

Our Early Learning Officer

Our new Early Learning Officer will focus on advocacy for members and promotion of preschool and early years learning within the community. Many of the administrative duties that have previously been undertaken by the CPS Executive Officer will be absorbed by existing Council staff. This will enable the Early Learning Officer to focus on supporting Preschool Parent Associations, Playschool Committees and parents of early learners generally. We are still in the early stages of recruiting our Early Learning Officer but, supported by the new Early Learning Committee, the new person will:

- listen to and address the needs of our preschool and playschool members
- advocate on behalf of our preschool and playschool members
- work towards making the Early Learning Committee a central information hub for early education information and resources
- encourage preschool enrolment across the ACT
- promote preschool participation through Child and Family Centres and at community and family events
- promote the early education options through Playgroups ACT for kids from birth to five years, as many people new to Canberra don't know what services are available
- support preschools to apply for grants.

CPS – a proud history

We are very proud of the role that the CPS has played in early learning in the ACT and look forward to that story continuing as part of Council.

The Canberra Preschool Society (CPS) has been one of Canberra's oldest and most successful

community organisations. Since 1943, CPS substantially influenced and shaped the provision of preschool education in the ACT, establishing and nurturing many preschools in the region. CPS has partnered with members to support the preschool education of more than 110,000 children in the ACT.

CPS has assisted Preschool Parent Associations and Playschool Committees in their roles and responsibilities as committee members. As preschool is the year before compulsory schooling, a large proportion of our parent members are new to the operational processes in and around ACT government schools. The Canberra Preschool Society has always offered an opportunity for these parents to share concerns, network, and be informed on matters relating to preschools within the ACT.

The CPS was founded in 1943 as the Canberra Nursery Kindergarten Association. This group of women began lobbying and fundraising to provide preschool education in their community. A year later, the first of Canberra's 'Nursery Kindergartens' (preschools) opened in Acton. A Parents and Friends Association was formed to help run the school.

The Association soon realised that this one centre could not cater for Canberra's rapidly growing population and there was significant community interest in extending the benefit of the Nursery School into every district. After many fundraising bridge parties, a further seven preschools opened over the next seven years.

The role of the CPS grew quickly too and by the 1950s they were providing support to Preschool Parent Associations in the same way that they have done right up to today.

There is more about the history of the CPS to read and enjoy which you can find via the new Early Learning tab on our website.

Getting involved

You can be part of future activities by joining our Early Learning Committee (just contact us). ●

Dates to remember

23 Aug **WORKSHOP: P&Cs as Good Employers**
7.00pm - 9.00pm
Centre for Teaching and Learning
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling

28 Aug **General Meeting: listening to Tuggeranong**
7.00pm - 9.30pm
Centre for Innovation and Learning
Caroline Chisholm School
108 Hambidge Cres, Chisholm

12 Sept **Early Learning Committee meeting**
7pm - 8.30pm
Maitland House
100 Maitland St, Hackett

25 Sept **Policy Conference /P&C Business model forum**
7.00pm - 9.30pm
Centre for Teaching and Learning
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling

29 Sept - 14 Oct **Council office closed for term break**

5 Oct **P&C Photo Competition closes**
see back page for details

23 Oct **General Meeting**
7.00pm - 9.30pm
Centre for Teaching and Learning
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling

Why I volunteer

We're so grateful to all those who give up their time to P&Cs and Council. But why do they do it?

Jayne Trustum

New Council Executive member & Neville Bonner Primary P&C Secretary



My Mum went to P&C meetings when I was a kid and told me it is the only way to know what happens at school. You know, she still does canteen once a month! Anyway, I've discovered that she is right. When you get involved you know what is going on, and at the same time you help make the school a better place.

The response of the kids is the greatest reward for the time you put in. Seeing their happy faces playing on the new equipment, using the things you helped provide, or when they get their lunches.

I've joined Council to try to expand this beyond my own school, to find out what is going on more broadly and perhaps be able to make a contribution.

Crystal Cox

New Council Executive member & Gowrie Primary P&C Volunteer



I find the P&C a really good way to bridge the gap between my kids and the teachers, and to help support the teachers. If, as a parent, you are on board and helping in any way that suits your time and commitments, it creates a good environment for the kids. Parents need to be *with* the school, not against it. The best outcomes have been when I have helped either in class or on the P&C. It's human nature – staff simply responded better when I was helping within the school.

I've also made some terrific friends through the P&C, but the main reward is making the school the best place possible for our kids.

Individual Learning Plans (ILPs)

Your questions answered

At Council's General Meeting in May, parents had many questions on the use of ILPs in our public schools. The Education Directorate's Jean Walker has provided some answers.

What is an ILP?

An ILP:

- identifies the personalised adjustments and supports required for a student to access, participate and engage in learning. An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education on the same basis as other students.
- includes long term and short-term goals which are developed according to the SMART guidelines – goals which are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely (see below).
- is an ongoing document which is futures-focused and includes goals for relevant transitions between year groups and schools.

SMART Goals

A central feature of ILPs is a series of SMART goals. These describe what the student will do, when and how they will do it and what the timeframe will be for achieving it.

SMART goals are:

- **Specific** – the goal is focused and specific to the student
What do you want the student to achieve?
- **Measurable** – an appropriate measure is selected to assess the attainment of the goal
How will you know when the student has reached the goal?
What are the success criteria?
- **Achievable/Agreed** – the goal is within the student's ability to achieve and the teachers control to effect change
What keys steps are needed?
- **Relevant/Realistic** – the goal is important/relevant to the student, reasonable and realistic
What do you need?
What time is available? Who will help?
- **Time bound/Timely** – the goal is



Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) offer personalised support and adjustments for students that need it.

contained within a term or semester.

What date will you reflect and assess the goal?

Why would my child need an ILP?

An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is developed if it has been identified that your child requires additional supports or adjustments to fully engage with and participate in their learning.

A student is *required* to have an ILP when:

- receiving targeted support (eg: ISP, Hearing/Vision, Specialist school, small group disability programs - LSC, LSU, LSUA)
- they are in care
- at request of parent/carer.

Students *may* also have an ILP when:

- identified with significant learning difficulties
- they have an EALD background
- identified as Gifted and Talented
- they are experiencing complex and/or challenging circumstances impacting their learning (eg: a young carer).

How is an ILP developed?

An ILP is developed, and reviewed, by those who know and support the child, including the student (when appropriate), parents, key school staff and others as necessary (eg: private therapist).

An initial meeting allows all key people to contribute and together determine appropriate, achievable goals. If parents feel they need support at these meetings, they are welcome to invite a support person. Following the meeting a draft ILP is shared for comment and feedback.

Who is responsible for implementing the ILP?

The ILP goals are implemented by all involved adults as appropriate, across the school day and learning experiences. ILP goals support the student access education and are not subject specific. Some goals will be relevant across all aspects of your child's life. For example, when there is a communication focussed goal, it will be important to have shared understanding and consistency between all adults across all your child's environments – home, school, extended family, community access.

How can I track progress?

An ILP is monitored and regularly evaluated and reviewed. At least once a year the review of the ILP will be communicated with you. This may not be as formal a meeting as the initial meeting and may be communicated via email or phone. At any time you may request a meeting with the school team to discuss the ILP.

As ILP goals are measurable the school will have data, assessment and observations to demonstrate your child's progress against each of the goals.

How can I support my child's school to develop and implement the ILP?

Developing and implementing an effective and targeted ILP involves a team – all those who know and support your child.

Share with the school:

- your family dreams, hopes and wishes – your long-term goals for your child
- your child's interests and hobbies
- medical and personal care needs
- how you support your child at home
- others involved supporting you and your child eg: NDIS registered providers.

What if the ILP is not making a difference?

If an ILP is not making a difference the goals need to be reviewed. If you have concerns, request a meeting with your child's team to explain your concerns and revisit the ILP's goals. A goal that is not possible to achieve in the short term will lead to frustration and a student potentially disengaging from all learning. It is important for students, parents and teaching teams to experience success through establishing high expectations with short-term goals that are achievable.

What if I am still not happy with my child's ILP and progress towards their goals?

Talk first with your child's teacher and the school's Disability Education Coordinator (DECO).

If you continue to have concerns, arrange a time to meet with the school principal.

The Education Directorate's Disability Education team can then be contacted on 6205 6925 or via disabilityeducation@act.gov.au.

The Directorate's Liaison Unit can be contacted for any unresolved concerns or complaints – phone 6205 5429. •

Jean Walker is the Manager of Disability Education in the ACT Education Directorate's Student Engagement team.

Cultural integrity in our schools

The Education Directorate is taking a new approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, as the Directorate's Patrick Chapman explains.

From 2018, the Directorate's approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education will be strengths-based with a focus on Cultural Integrity across all ACT public schools.

Cultural Integrity describes the environment a school creates to:

- demonstrate both respect and high regard for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, knowledge systems and languages
- welcome and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and local community members
- meet the learning needs and aspirations of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

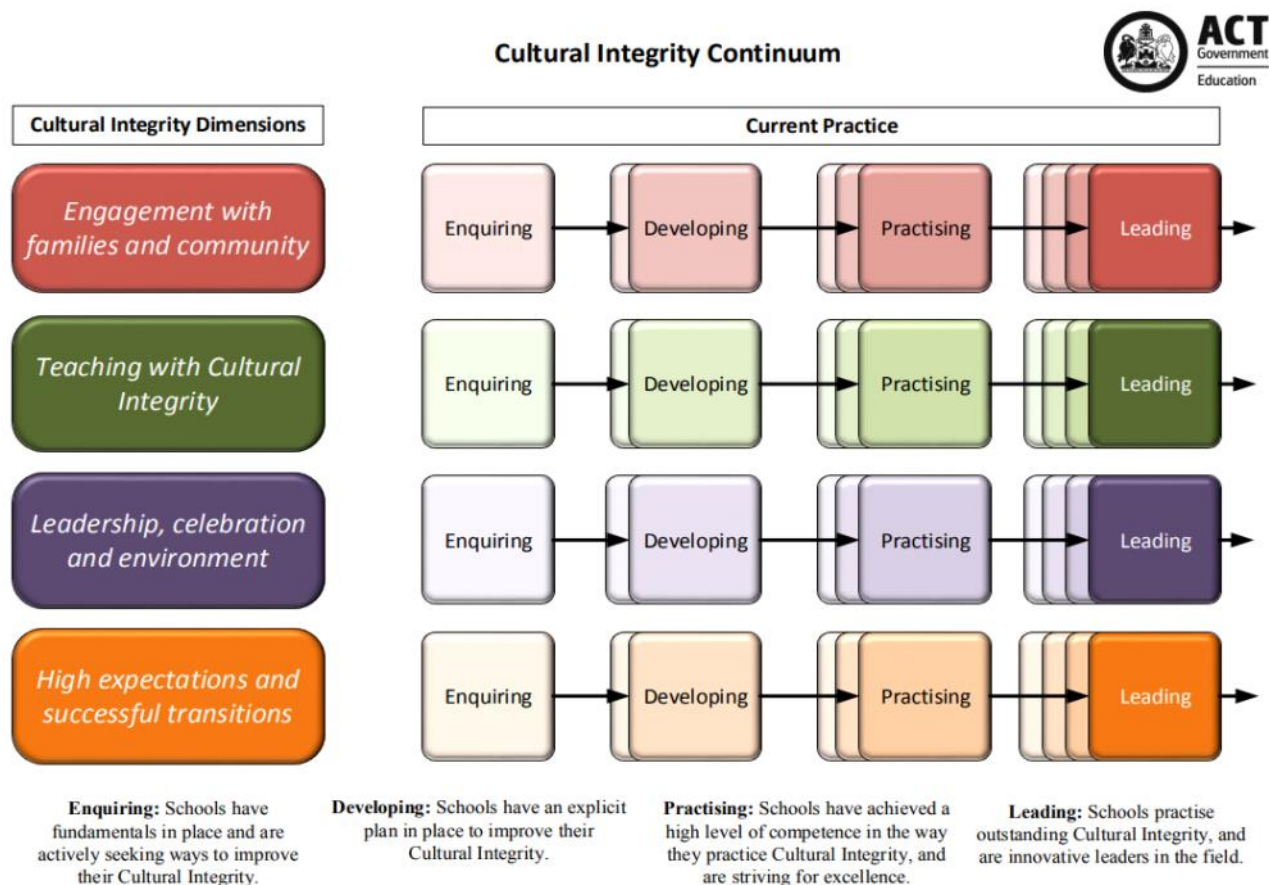
There is no one way to develop Cultural Integrity and each school will have different strategies depending on their Cultural Integrity priorities

and the priorities of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families.

We are creating an environment of high expectations for our students and our schools. The Directorate's expectations of schools when supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will be clearer than they have ever been. With a suite of new resources, schools will be better supported to meet those expectations.

One of the resources is the Cultural Integrity Continuum (below) which schools can use to assess where they sit along the scale and what their Cultural Integrity priorities should be for the year.

The four Cultural Integrity Dimensions are designed to assist schools to self-assess their current practice against the Cultural Integrity Continuum. Each level builds upon previous levels, and for this reason individual descriptors



are not necessarily articulated across levels from 'enquiring' to 'leading'.

Schools are already building their Cultural Integrity and creating welcoming environments for their students and families in a number of different ways including:

- creating school board positions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents/caregivers
- providing professional learning opportunities for teaching and administration staff, as well as school leaders
- hosting celebrations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in partnership with parents, students and the local community.

You can read about Cultural Integrity in action at some of our schools in the box below.

By building Cultural Integrity in all schools, the



Inter-school Buroinjin carnivals are popular events across ACT public schools.

ACT is growing richer, more engaging learning environments for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and for the whole school community. ●

Patrick Chapman is the Assistant Manager of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education at the ACT Education Directorate.

Cultural Integrity in action

Kingsford Smith Koori Preschool Acknowledgement of Country

As part of an ongoing conversation about the importance of acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we live, Kingsford Smith Koori Preschool students, with their Koori preschool assistant, adapted an Acknowledgement of Country which is used in preschools around Australia to help young children learn to connect to country and culture, whilst learning valuable motor and verbal skills: "We at Koori Pre, would like to say thank you to the Ngunnawal people, of the Canberra Nation, for letting us share your land. We promise to look after it, the animals and people too. Hello land (all touch the land). Hello sky (arms up to the sky). Hello me (hug self). Hello friends (open arms)."

Ngunnawal Plant Use guide

Some schools have explored ways to incorporate the *Ngunnawal Plant Use guide* into their teaching and learning programs. The book includes an introduction to Ngunnawal history and natural resource use, descriptions and photos of 69 different plant species, including their use, distribution and method of propagation. All schools received a copy of the book and associated materials to use in classrooms.

Buroinjin carnivals and gala days

Inter-school Buroinjin carnivals and gala days for students in years 5 to 10 have become well known events across ACT public schools. In many schools, the sport of Buroinjin has been incorporated into physical activity programs and school culture with lunchtime games becoming a common occurrence. The 2018 primary school gala and high school carnival saw nearly 800 students from more than thirty schools participate over two days.

At our P&C...

A whole-school camp out on school grounds — complete with toasting marshmallows on an open fire — sounds like loads of fun and a great way to bring the school community together. It also sounds like an organisational headache! Bonnie Rappola, Council Delegate for Southern Cross Early Childhood School, explains how they made it work.

Our P&C at Southern Cross Early Childhood School (SCECS) is always looking for new ways to engage our community and provide new and exciting experiences. At our first meeting for 2017 our principal had an interesting idea: to host a camping trip, on school grounds, for everyone in the school community. It was daunting and exciting all at once, and so CampOUT! was born.

Camping is great, my family loves it, spending time outdoors, lighting a campfire, toasting marshmallows, bushwalks, BBQ breakfast cook up, spotlighting animals at dusk, kids running wild exploring — no screens — but how to create a genuine overnight camping experience on school grounds, in the middle of Canberra and get permission from the Education Directorate?

To make it work the P&C and school hosted jointly. We all agreed it had to be fun, safe and equitable. The first part was easy, we're good at fun. Safety took a lot of planning, taking into consideration site access and layout, first aid, supervision and, of course, little people and FIRE. How do we get permission and whose insurance covers what? Finally equity was key to the event being truly accessible to everyone in our community. Not everyone owns camping gear.

This year's event, held in April, was the second CampOUT! Around 30 families participated in the overnight event. For several families, it was their first ever camping adventure. Bringing families together in a shared outdoor experience truly models the school's motto "From Little Things Big Things Grow". Evidence shows that

Young and old gathered for story time.



connecting children with nature in the early childhood setting is the best way to seed a love of active outdoor play for life.

So, how did we do it?

Safety first

Thirty families, means approximately 50 kids, all under nine years, who need to eat, sleep, go to the toilet and toast marshmallows. We worked together to create a very thorough risk assessment that had to be signed off by the Education Directorate (EDU) as this was the first of its kind. It included the usual things plus whose insurance (P&C or school/EDU) covered what and the fire set up.

As everyone arrived, they registered. We had a staff member camped at the gate in case anyone needed to leave in the middle of the night. The P&C provided a first aid officer with the principal covering the late night shift.

No cars were allowed, so we had wheelbarrows and bike trailers to collect everyone's gear at the gate. In 2017 we tried camper trailers but there were safety concerns, so this year was tents only.

At 7pm we locked the gate so the kids could safely run wild in the dark. A site manager checked tent placement and a couple of bathroom monitors kept the facilities tidy and stocked.

About us

ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations is the peak body for public school parent associations in the ACT.

We represent over 60,000 parents and carers in 87 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.

Fire

The kids at SCECS are encouraged to test boundaries, get messy and engage in a bit of risky play. We fenced off the fire zone and controlled access via fire monitors. The kids and their grown ups all had a fire safety briefing before proudly receiving their fire-safe badge and being able to hang out by the fire and toast the ever-important marshmallows.



Fun

The trick was to provide enough to do without it being over scheduled, allowing for free play and exploration. How often do you get to explore the school grounds at night? Due to being in the city we enlisted the help of some cute native animal puppets that hid in trees or under logs and the spotlight hunt was on! Before bedtime we had story time under the stars. After the little people were asleep it was the big kids' and grown ups' time to hang out at the fire, have a cuppa, toast more marshmallows and catch up.

Equity

We held CampOUT! this year a week after Easter. The high chance of it being very cold meant families couldn't get away with a \$20 tent and a \$5 sleeping bag and no one wants to spend big money on just one night. We encouraged families to try to borrow a tent and bring just blankets and doonas. We looked into buying or seeking donated equipment to loan out, but then we discovered Capital Camping Hire. They waived the minimum 2 night hire, delivered everything, including a spare family package just in case, then returned the next morning and packed it all up! Small family tents were only \$18 a night. For dinner most families packed a picnic, got takeaway or pizza, but some did cook.

We finished up the whole event with a cereal, milo, bacon and eggs breakfast cooked by the P&C, then everyone packed up exhausted but happy and promising to be back next year. ●

Our Executive

President:	Kirsty McGovern-Hooley
Vice President:	Andrew Bidwell, John Haydon
Secretary:	Cecilia Shlegel
Treasurer:	Crystal Cox
Committee:	Sharon Ding, Jane Koitka Vivienne Pearce, Jayne Trustum, Bonnie Rappola

Life members

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

Contact us

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Office staff

Executive Officer:	Terry Sanders
Policy Officer:	Veronica Elliott
Communications Officer:	Janelle Kennard
Executive Assistant:	Recruiting now
Early Learning Officer:	Recruiting now

Office hours

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



Entries accepted
throughout Term 3

Closes 5pm Oct 5, 2018

Enter online:
www.surveymonkey.com/r/PCPhotos

P&C Photo Competition

Pull out your phone or camera!
Mobilise your keen photographers!

CASH prizes for the photographs which best and most creatively illustrate the P&C's activities and contribution to the school.

1st prize - \$500 cash for your P&C!
2nd prize - \$250 cash for your P&C!
PLUS - 8 Lucky-draw Prizes

All entries go into the draw to win 1 of 8 fabulous 'CountRight' coin counting trays, so enter as many photos as you can.

All winning entries will star on our website and social media channels.

Check the terms and conditions on our website, along with guidelines and tips for photographing children.



ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations