



Feeding community

After more than two years with few opportunities for fundraising or community events, it was a delight to see the success of P&C-run election day stalls across Canberra in May.

The Democracy Sausage has become something of a cultural icon in recent years with voters almost as interested in the BBQ options as those on the ballot paper. And P&Cs have been thrilled to oblige, with sausage sandwiches for all and an increasing array of other stalls and options.

“It’s a great opportunity to fundraise from a broader section of the community,” notes Alison Elliott, Council President, “rather than reaching time and time again into parents’ pockets. It’s a wonderful social day too, a chance for the school to take its place as the centre of the local community.”



The perfect snag: Charles Conder Primary

So it was great news to many P&Cs when Council announced in April, following talks with the Education Directorate, that election-day stalls could be run at public schools with relatively few restrictions.

Continued on page 3



Torrens P&C volunteers preparing to feed voters at the May federal election.

Also in this issue

- [From the President](#)
- [Special lunches \(fundraising\)](#)
- [Our Friend of Public Education](#)
- [Council Faces](#)
- [Trash-reducing fundraising](#)
- [School Allied Health Services](#)
- [Upcoming Council events](#)
- [At Our P&C: Bingo!](#)

From the President



Alison Elliott

Term three is likely to be another challenging 10 weeks for everyone – students, parents and staff. There will be ongoing pressure in relation to staff absences, and increasing pressure on families. We know a lot of parents are having a tough time right now. Some need to take time off work to be home due to remote learning, which is wearing thin with some employers, and others are struggling financially or facing mental health challenges. Because of this, Council called for a stakeholder roundtable, which will include staff from the Education Directorate, Council, the Education Union and the Education Minister's office, to be held on August 8. Council will advocate for parents on a range of issues, including remote learning, planning days, inclusion, reporting and mental health supports.

Congratulations to Kirsty McGovern-Hooley, our Vice President, on winning the 'Friend of Public Education' award at the AEU awards dinner in May. Kirsty is a former Council President, and has been advocating on behalf of parents, particularly around disability and inclusion and school infrastructure, for many years, volunteering her time to help advocate for parents who need extra support. Kirsty is my mentor. I really value her advice and insights.

Council recently made a submission to the ACT Government, ahead of their 2022-23 budget. We're very pleased to see that money has been allocated for a new college in Gungahlin, something Council has advocated strongly for years. We were pleased to see funding for other new schools and upgrades to several older schools, but believe [more forward planning](#) for future schools is needed.

We would love to hear how your school is coping at the moment. It has been a very challenging two and a half years for everyone. Council encourages P&Cs to be pro-active in looking out for those within their school community, including staff, who may be struggling, and encourage a culture of kindness. We are all in this together and struggling in our own ways, but a kind gesture can make such a difference to a bad day or week.

Is your school community looking out for one another? Does your school community have a place for parents to communicate, offer and request support? Is your community doing anything special to show staff appreciation? Please share your story with us in a quick [email](#)!

We know it continues to be a really difficult time for P&Cs in terms of fundraising, and it is very difficult to plan as things can change so quickly. If your P&C is struggling, please reach out to Council who can provide sound advice and support.

Your feedback helps us gauge how the community is feeling prior to our regular meetings with the Directorate and Education Minister. If you have any concerns or burning issues, or positive feedback, we would love you to share that at the [next meeting](#), on 23 August at 7pm. If you would like something in particular raised for discussion at the next meeting, please [email the office](#). ●

Feeding community

Continued from front page

To help everyone out, we provided a template COVID-safe plan, and the opportunity to be part of a [mega list of democracy sausage sites](#), which the media devoured and helped spread the word!

At least 55 P&Cs held stalls at school polling places. P&Cs took the opportunity to provide coffee carts, ice cream vans, cake and plant stalls, raffles and games for kids on top of all the sausages, and halal and vegetarian BBQ options. From all accounts it was a huge success, and not just financially.

Our [Canberra P&C Leaders Network](#) closed Facebook group was a great place to crowd-source answers to the pressing questions in the lead up to the event: where to buy onions, how to label cakes, suggested pricing and how many sausages to buy!

“We had a fantastic day at Evatt Primary,” said Dani Davis, P&C President. “It was successful on a financial front as well as community engagement.”

“Monash made \$3100 from a BBQ and Cake Stall. We were over the moon!” P&C President Jess O’Callaghan told us.

At our May General Meeting we were pleased to hear that most P&Cs had exceeded their fundraising goals. Overwhelmingly, P&Cs also reported that they had great support from the local community and the school, and that they had reconnected with volunteers who enjoyed the day. Overall, it had been a morale boost for all those involved.

“It was a huge day for Mawson Primary and the P&C,” said Olga Rogachev, P&C President, “with 1100 sausages, 850 dumplings and multiple cakes sold!” Mawson went all out, with BBQ, cakes, Artisan Market, coffee van and live entertainment.



Several P&Cs took the opportunity to sell more than sausages.



Long queues for the P&C BBQ at Torrens Primary School.

We also heard many reports of people making donations to the P&C, or saying “keep the change” when buying sausages.

“We had an amazing community response to our stall,” reported Kate Hamilton, Chapman Primary P&C President. “There were longer queues for the sausage sizzle than for voting, many people were just turning up for the sausages and cakes! ... Thousands of dollars have been raised.”

“One of the best outcomes was having our volunteers on site, chatting and getting to know one another. It gave all of our P&C committee a huge boost to see the school community coming together.”

Council looks forward to helping make the next election equally successful for our members. ●

Fundraising/event ideas

Special lunches

Whether your P&C runs a canteen or not, special lunch days are a highlight for families and a handy fundraiser. We share tips and ideas from the expertise in our Canteen Subcommittee on how to make the day a success – and keep it healthy.

Providing a special lunch – or recess – for the school can be a great way for the P&C to add colour to the school calendar and raise some funds. Offering something different for lunch creates interest and excitement around the school. It is something everyone can look forward to: no lunch to make in the morning, no dry sandwiches, and enjoying a different meal with friends.

For those running canteens, special food days can be the difference between a financially viable canteen and one that is going under. Some P&Cs try to offer one every term.

Kate Rowntree, member of Council's Canteen Subcommittee and manager at a P&C-run canteen for years points out that while they are definitely worth it, special food days are a lot of work. "There is no secret, super easy special lunch that other people are doing that makes a fortune for no work. Special lunches are hard work for everyone so plan well and work smarter not harder."

Here are her top tips for running a special lunch for your school, even without many volunteers.

Shout it!

Advertise the day well ahead. Create colourful posters around the school so the kids know it's happening (and can nag at home!) and to create excitement. Planning ahead will also allow you to use Flexischools (or other online ordering) which will make the day much more streamlined.

Split it

If you are a larger school you may need to split special lunches, for example, do students in K-2 one week and Years 3-6 the next.

Shrink it

If you don't have the volunteers to do lunch, go smaller scale with a recess special. It could be a hot cross bun and a chocolate milk, biscuits and a juice, or a muffin and an Up and Go. Try and find a drink or flavour that you don't generally stock to make it special. If you make your food item the day or two before and buy in a drink you should be able to get it out at recess (and still do a regular lunch if you run the canteen). This can provide a good income with no extra helpers.

Shift it

You may find it easier to get parent helpers if you shift from lunch time to something out of school hours when parents aren't at work. You could try a Mother's Day or Father's Day breakfast, dinner prior to a disco, or Milo and a muffin before the Book Week costume parade.



Facebook promotion for a special lunch day by Giralang Primary P&C

Outsource

It's ok to buy in food. Of course you *can* pop all that popcorn yourself but if you need 300 portions and have no volunteers, then buy it in! Add it into the costing. If you plan ahead you can keep an eye out for specials at the supermarket.

Don't cut across big canteen days

If your P&C already runs the canteen, don't hold your special lunch on a Friday. Fridays are already busy and already make you money so do your special lunch on your quietest day to maximise the bonus money. Similarly, hold your special lunch as early in the term as possible because the end of term is already busier.

Get help

If you have a good relationship with your school, negotiate for year 5/6 students to help (packing and delivering baskets for example). Sometimes schools will allow staff to assist as well, especially if the day is linked to a school event, like harmony day.



Senior students at Charnwood-Dunlop Primary help deliver lunches.

Keep it cool

If your special food day includes a frozen element, put a stamp on the lunch order bag (something big, bright and the same for everyone). The student eats their main lunch and snack and then brings the empty bag to collect their frozen treat or drink. You can just stand outside the canteen exchanging bags for frozen treats.

What to serve

The idea is to provide something different and interesting that kids want to eat and parents want to order. For many people involved in canteens, special food days are known as 'red food days' in reference to the Schools Food and Drink Policy which allows less healthy food (classified as 'red') to be served a maximum of twice per term. But special food days needn't be 'red'. Below are some Green and Amber suggestions for a fun food day that doubles as a fundraiser. The [ACT Nutrition Support Service](#) have many great [recipes](#) to inspire, including those linked below.

Lunches

Fried Rice (GREEN without ham). Can be pre-made and frozen. Allergy friendly and vegetarian.

Pasta (GREEN or AMBER). There are multiple options and sauces can be pre-made and frozen. Also easy for vegetarian.

Mini Pizzas (GREEN or AMBER depending on toppings). You can make bases yourself and freeze or buy them in (the premade ones for Aldi, Coles and Woolies assess as green). A gluten free muffin cut in half works well for a GF option.

Sushi (GREEN or AMBER). Buy it in! Easy for vegetarian and allergies.

Burgers (GREEN). Pre-make patties and freeze. Cook them on a flat top BBQ and set up a production line of buns etc. Keep it really simple: burger and sauce or burger, cheese and sauce.

Kate tells us: “At Mt Rogers Primary our *McMtRogers Day* was really popular even though we already had a burger on our menu. We made our own patties and added carrot and zucchini to them. We ran it with three paid staff, the BSO on the BBQ and two year 6 students delivering baskets for 350 orders.”

Bolognaise / Meatball Subs (GREEN). Take a hot dog bun and fill with bolognaise, cheese on top, wrapped then into the warmers/oven to melt and crisp. You can make meat sauce in advance and use slow cookers and stove top on the day to heat large quantities.

Soft Tacos / Burrito (GREEN) Popular with lettuce, corn, cheese and bolognaise sauce or a chicken version pre-made. You can roll and wrap them or make a boat out of the soft tortilla and put it in a clamshell container. Use slow cookers and stove top to heat large amounts of sauce.

Mini Pie or Mini Quiches (AMBER or GREEN). There is something about mini pies that kids love! Even when pies are on the menu if you do ‘mini pies’ it’s guaranteed sales! This one does use lots of warmer/oven space.

Butter Chicken (GREEN or AMBER). Cook from scratch and freeze or buy ready made sauce (need to have these assessed). Universally popular, even in primary schools.

Extras, or for recess

Chocolate mousse (AMBER). Made with light milk this assesses as amber. Powdered mix from the wholesaler is super easy to make, just whip in a stand mixer. This is a super useful product as it keeps for a week, it’s Gluten free and you can brighten it up by adding berries.

Jelly cups (AMBER if made with fruit juice and gelatine). You can add fruit. Keeps well.

Pikelets (GREEN). These are best made on the day but can definitely still pass made the day before. Adding Milo to the mix changes them up a bit.



Image courtesy ACT Nutrition Support Service

Biscuits (AMBER) Mixture can be made in advance and frozen in rolls, then slice and cook the day (or two) before

Popcorn (GREEN if air popped). Pop it yourself or buy in.

Cupcake / Muffin (AMBER). Make these in advance and freeze then cook the day before.

Apple slinky (GREEN) Lots of fun but very laborious.

Ice Blocks. Many are amber including Paddle Pops and Frozen Yogurt Twists.

Fruit juice in a pouch and frozen is really popular. ●

Congratulations!

Our Friend of Public Education

Kirsty McGovern-Hooley has long been a passionate friend of public education. That has now been formally recognised in a Public Education Week Award from the ACT Education Union.



In presenting the Friend of Public Education award, AEU President Angela Burroughs recognised Kirsty as a steadfast proponent of parent and student voices in public schools, notably during her time as the President of the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations.

“Kirsty has been a true champion of public education in the ACT and this has been most evident in her advocacy for inclusive education,” said Angela. “The ACT public education system is better placed to understand and address the challenges of disability and inclusive education due to her enormous contribution. The AEU is proud to recognise Kirsty as a true friend of public education.”

Kirsty has been involved with Council, as a parent representative and advocate since 2013, and finished up a busy, and very productive, three year stint as Council President in 2020. She is also a long-term P&C member, serving as Treasurer and President at Farrer Primary School P&C.

Kirsty was thrilled to receive the much-deserved award.

“P&Cs – and their volunteers – are in this game because we want to make schools better. If teachers are supported and happy then we are going to have better classrooms and a better experience for our kids. When parents and teachers are on the same page, then we can do amazing things – I really believe that.”

“So this award is really special because it’s actually being named as a friend of public education. And that’s what I’ve always tried to do.”

“Sometimes I feel like I’m a *critical* friend,” she adds, laughing, “but that’s an important part of it too.”

Over the last decade, Kirsty has worked with determination and passion to give parent perspectives to ACT decision makers and improve our public schools. With both a great ability to see the broad picture, and a keen eye for detail, she has brought a keen intelligence to improving outcomes for students with disabilities, to caring for student and





parent mental health, and for better gifted and talented education. She has also been closely involved with work on managing bullying and violence in schools and a member of the ACT Government’s School Education Advisory Committee.

As ACT Education Minister, Yvette Berry, said at the Awards ceremony, “Kirsty has been a tireless advocate for, and friend of public education. I appreciate Kirsty’s open-mindedness and constructive approach to the challenges facing public education. Kirsty is committed to understanding the perspectives

Yvette Berry, ACT Education Minister, congratulates Kirsty.

of other stakeholders and finding solutions that work for everyone. Kirsty’s approach has always demonstrated deep respect for the work of teachers and school staff. This work has been done quietly, without fanfare and without any expectation of thanks.”

Kirsty explained that part of what motivates her efforts, comes from her grandfather.

“My Pop was a wharfie, a union man from when he started work at 13 years of age. So he had a strong respect for unions, but also, having missed out on education, he was such a supporter of schools and education for all. So education was so valued in my family. That’s part of why I do what I do.”

And her thoughts on being recognised with the award?

“I’ve always advocated for more recognition for P&C volunteers,” she said, “but I didn’t mean me! Though it really is wonderful.” ●

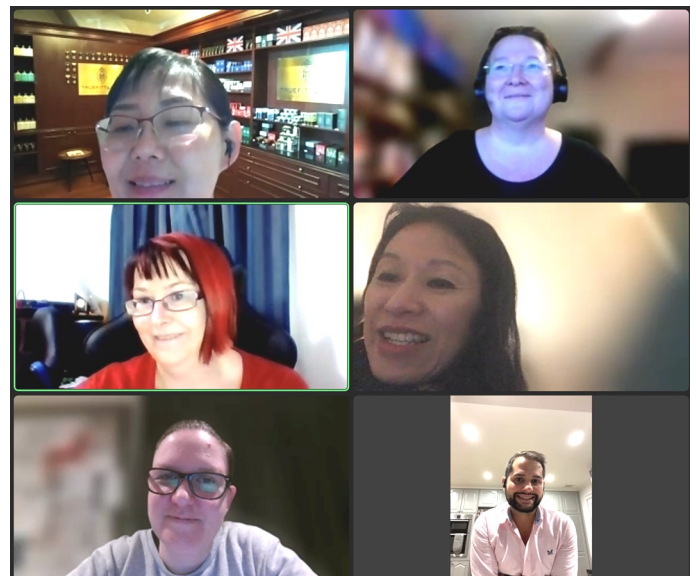
Council faces

Our Executive Committee

The wonderful volunteers who make up our Executive Committee are a crucial part of Council. They provide oversight of all Council activities, set our strategic direction and deliberate policies and approaches. They devote a lot of time and effort to represent public school parents and consider ways to improve our schools. You can volunteer to join the Executive at our AGM in November!

From top left, across: Norma Yap, Kirsty McGovern-Hooley, Alison Elliott (President), Sharon Ding, Jayne Trustum and Taymore Tabbath at an Executive Meeting.

Absent: Cecilia Shlegel, Vivienne Pearce OAM, Erin Papps, Sarah Everingham. ●



Four years of trash-reducing fundraising!

ACT Container Deposit Scheme reaches new milestone

The ACT Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) celebrated its fourth birthday on 30 June while also celebrating over 181 million containers returned through its network of return points. In four years, the scheme has given back over \$18 million to the ACT people, either directly or through fundraising initiatives by schools and other community and charity groups.

There were free cookies and hot drinks at all four cash-back depots to mark the event as well as a photobooth at the new Mitchell Cash-back Depot.

ACT schools are strong supporters of the scheme with 56% of ACT schools surveyed participating in the scheme and 93% of these having an ongoing container collection program.



Charnwood-Dunlop students lead the way to a more sustainable future

Last year, the students and staff at Charnwood Dunlop School, who were the 2021 winners of the ACT Sustainability Leadership Award at the Actsmart Awards, started looking at ways to rejuvenate the school recycling system.

Teacher Lisa Williams saw an opportunity to improve recycling practices by taking the juice boxes to a nearby ACT Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) return point, generating a 10c refund for each juice box.

Did You Know?

Network operator Return-It have a range of services to help your school get collecting!

- If you can't get to a return point, try the ReCollect collection service. The first pick up is free and then 3 cents per container is charged. [Contact Return-It.](#)
- There's a FREE trailer hire program, great for large container drives or major school events – book [here.](#)
- Sign up for a [Return-It Express Account](#) and share the details with your community so they can donate their container refunds straight to your school account.

“So far we have raised over \$250 that can be put towards other sustainability initiatives around our school,” says Lisa.

Students in Years 3 and 4 can join a ‘Sustainability Squad’ with part of their role being to encourage other classes within the school to recycle.

“Students in the Sustainability Squad get really excited to see that their school is making a difference to the environment,” says Lisa. “They come back from their duties saying things like ‘Kindergarten has done a really good job! All the juice boxes were in the right bin!’”

“An important job of the Sustainability Squad is to check class recycling bins, and report back to each class on how they are going with their recycling,” she says.

“This provides students and teachers with constructive feedback to improve the school’s recycling practices.” •

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Exchange for Change.*

More inspiration

Check out the live [performance dashboard](#) to see the cumulative impact of your returns.

Fundraising via the ACT CDS is a great way to inspire students to lead sustainability projects. Download the [fundraising toolkit](#).

Try the free [educational resources](#) from education partner [Cool Australia](#) (requires registration).

All about...

School Allied Health Services

ACT public schools provide support for students in many ways, to help them engage with their studies and school life. One important component are the professionals who are part of the Allied Health Services. The Education Directorate explain about this important team.

What is the Allied Health Service in Student Engagement?

The Allied Health Service (AHS) is a team of allied health professionals and assistants who provide their specialised knowledge, skills and expertise to work with schools to support students to access and engage in education. The AHS provides direct and indirect support to individuals, groups of students, cohorts and the school community through the provision of advice, consultation, specialised expertise, assessment and intervention.



Who is in the Allied Health Service team?

The team includes Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Speech Language Pathologists, Social Workers, Senior Psychologists and Allied Health Assistants.

Is the Allied Health Service the same as the Network Student Engagement Team?

Allied health professionals have been delivering services to ACT public schools for several years. Previously, they did this as part of the Network Student Engagement Team (NSET). In response to the needs of schools, NSET was reviewed and specialist teachers redistributed to support schools. The NSET allied health professional teams were incorporated into the Clinical practice

team, alongside the School Psychology Service.

Who can access the Allied Health Service?

AHS can only be accessed at a school's request, through internal referral pathways.

What services does the AHS provide?

The AHS offers a suite of multidisciplinary and profession-specific services. These may target the whole school, a class or an individual student. Services offered range from advice to specific tailored interventions which assist with student learning, wellbeing and engagement.

In collaboration with schools, and based on their request for support, services may include:

- building the capability of others, including teachers, support staff, parents and carers
- contributing to the development of school-wide student wellbeing and engagement policies, processes and programs
- providing therapy, counselling and/or intervention with individual students or student groups.

AHS staff may deliver services in a variety of ways depending on the method most appropriate to the concern and particular circumstances. These may include:

- consulting with staff or parents
- providing professional learning (for example a presentation or workshop to teachers or parents)
- working with a group or individual student
- working with parents/carers
- coaching or advising teachers and other school staff.

What parent/carer consent is required?

If the school wishes to discuss the needs of an individual student with the AHS, parents/carers will be approached to provide consent to share their child's personal information with the team. Informed consent will then be sought from parents/carers prior to allied health professionals becoming further engaged with an individual student. •

Thanks to the ACT Education Directorate for supplying this explainer.

Council events

- 15 Aug Member help session ([details/register](#)) 12:30-1:30pm
- 18 Aug Early Learning Committee Meeting ([register](#)) 7:30pm
- 23 Aug Council General Meeting ([register](#)) 7-9:30pm
- 31 Aug Canteen Sub-Committee Meeting ([register](#)) 7-9pm
- 15 Sept Parent Webinar: [Transition to school](#) 7:30-8:30pm
- 11 Oct [Free member workshop](#): Getting Grants 7-9pm
- 20 Oct [Free member workshop](#): Financial Review 7-9pm

All our meetings are held via Zoom.

Got Questions?
about your P&C

Drop-in and ask!
Monday 15 August
12:30 - 1:30pm

No question too big or too small.

What if positions are not filled?

How to run a COVID-safe event?

We need new fundraising ideas. How should we spend our funds?

Register online: www.actparents.org.au/training

ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations

At our P&C...

How do you host a great night for the school community and raise funds at the same time? Put together a great P&C team, add support from the school, some personality and hijinks, plates of tasty food and – Bingo! – job done!

Macgregor Primary School is still smiling after their third annual Bingo Night, held in June. The night is the brainchild of the P&C's fundraising 'Queen', Tracey Barker.

"It was such a great night, each year it gets bigger as the word spreads," said Eleanor Bates, P&C President at Macgregor.

"It's about bringing parents – and others from the broader community – together for a fun evening. For many parents it's a great night out, and this year there was such a sense of enjoyment to be able to go into the school once more," she said.



Players paid \$15 for entry (or \$90 for a table of six) which included one bingo book of 10 games and stamper.

"Most people purchased an extra book or two on the night, for \$10 each, for more chances to win," Eleanor explained. "At the half-time break we had some coin-toss games for a little more fundraising, and there was a raffle as well."

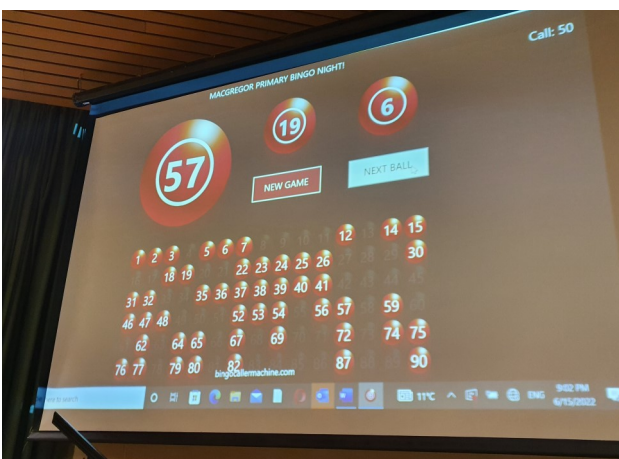
Two prizes, sourced from donations, and some purchased by the P&C for the event, were given out for each game – one for the first player to complete a line and a larger prize for the BINGO! (complete game card).

But the most important ingredient for success? A lively bingo caller!

"For most people there, it wasn't really about the prizes, it was about helping the school and having fun, and that was guaranteed by our amazing bingo caller – Bronwyn. She's one of our Mums and is so much fun," said Eleanor. "She makes up her own calls, with references to current affairs, or local in-jokes, and the odd risqué call!"

Everyone was encouraged to participate.

"On each table were copies of a couple of calls and responses, so when a particular call came up people could jump up with the response. One call referenced Dr Who, and the response was a chorus of 'Exterminate! Exterminate!'. A call of 30 resulted in singing 'Tiptoe through the tulips' – there are 30 days of Floriade. There was a lot of laughter and freddo frogs as participation rewards."





“The school and our wonderful principal have also been hugely supportive. We are very lucky, with staff filling three tables,” Eleanor said.

The P&C-run canteen offered food for the evening, including homemade treats like sausage rolls, mini sweet potato and feta quiche or pumpkin soup, plus old favourites like potato wedges.

“Overall, I think it is less work than a trivia night – no need write and check all those questions,” she said. “We used an online program to generate the numbers.”

“It was a great night in terms of fundraising. We made a profit of over \$1000 on the tickets and coin toss, plus the canteen made a small profit on the sales of food, making about \$300.”

The school community can’t wait for Bingo 2023! ●

See more from the night on [Macgregor P&C’s Facebook page](#).

ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations

Starting School Webinar

Helping families prepare children for starting preschool or kindergarten in 2023

Thursday 15 September
7.30–8.30pm



Hear about the research and practical tips to prepare children for a smooth transition to preschool and kindergarten




Register
For a free resource kit and webinar link



P&C help

Your parent association is a member of the ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations. We can help you to run your organisation well.

Contact us with your P&C questions!

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

9:30-2:30pm, Monday - Friday.
 Closed public holidays and school holidays.

About us

The parent voice on public education

The ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations is the peak body for public school parent associations. We bring together delegates from Canberra’s public schools to represent the views of parents to decision makers and the media.

About our magazine

ParentACTION is our free journal.

Contributions, advertising and feedback are always welcome. Contact the Editor, [Janelle Kennard](#), at jkennard@actparents.org.au.

Views expressed in this journal are not necessarily those of Council. Authorised by Veronica Elliott for the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens

Our people

Executive

President: Alison Elliott
 Vice Presidents: Kirsty McGovern-Hooley
 Secretary: Cecilia Shlegel
 Treasurer: Vacant
 Committee: Sharon Ding, Taymore Tabbath, Jayne Trustum, Vivienne Pearce OAM, Erin Papps, Norma Yap, Sarah Everingham.

Office staff

Executive Officer: Veronica Elliott
 Communications Officer: Janelle Kennard
 Policy Officer: Recruiting now!
 Early Learning Officer: Marina Spurgin
 Executive Assistant: Melissa Lee

Council acknowledges that we live, learn and work on the traditional lands of the Ngunnawal people. We pay respect to elders past, present, and future.