



# ParentACTion

*The parent voice on public education*

**Term 2, 2013**

ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations

## New school approval process

The ACT government has given in-principle approval for three new private schools in Canberra, despite the concerns raised by Council, the Australian Education Union and Save Our Schools.

Brindabella Christian College has been given approval to establish a new campus at the old Charnwood High School building, and the Seventh Day Adventist-run Canberra Christian College is looking to open a new school in Wright. Al Taqwa Islamic School has been given approval for a campus in Gungahlin. All schools propose to open early in 2014.

Since it was discovered that the Education Minister had approved these applications back in December, the decision making process has been heavily criticised. No public announcement was made, leaving Council, the Australian Education Union and Save Our Schools to question the lack of transparency surrounding the application process.

"There was certainly room under the Act for the Minister to deny these new schools given the applications contained little evidence of demand for such schools from the community," said Council Acting President John Haydon.

According to the *Education Act 2004* the Minister is required to consider both the impact on the ongoing viability of existing schools in the area and the community demand for the proposed schools. Council submitted their concerns against both these criteria to the Minister in May 2012.

These concerns have been discussed with the Minister's staff in meetings, published on

Council's website and discussed in numerous Council publications.

Council is not against private schools. However, under the current school funding arrangements, 55% of the funding of private schools in the ACT is taxpayer dollars. Council believes that any commitment of taxpayer education funds to new schools should be done through a rigorous process.

Council believes that the provision of private

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# From the Acting President

Welcome to our second edition of ParentACTION for 2013! It has been busy few months, and we have plenty to share with you.

We have some articles addressing issues that surfaced following irregularities in the Minister approving new private schools. You may have read about Council's concerns in the Canberra Times. Council signed a joint letter to the Education Minister with the Australian Education Union and the Save our Schools organisation to seek a review of the current process of approving new private schools. You can read about this issues on the front cover, and pages 3-5.

Following our query about legislation which comes into force in November, advice was received from the Education Directorate that it is likely some volunteers at schools will need to **have a 'Working with Vulnerable People' check** undertaken by the office of Regulatory Services. Guidelines as to what activities at schools will necessitate undergoing the check, which is free for volunteers, will be provided at the end of term 2. Schools are working through having all of their staff do the check. More details are provided on page 6.

President Viv Pearce and I met on 5 May with Jarrah Robbins, an advisor to the only Greens MLA in the Assembly, Shane Rattenbury. Because Shane Rattenbury is a Minister of Cabinet (one of only five Ministers in the ACT Government) the Greens have lost the ability to ask questions on notice in the Assembly. For P&C Council this leaves the Liberals as the only party able to raise questions on notice about issues of importance to Council.

At the executive meeting on 14 May it was agreed that Steve Dozspot (Opposition Spokesperson for Education), who had requested that he meet with Council, will be invited give an address at a future general meeting. The same opportunity will be offered to the other **parties' appropriate members on other dates.** An acknowledgement of country motion was agreed to and a draft social media policy presented by Jena Dobie, our Communications

Officer. An overall action plan for the coming federal election was agreed.

Assistant Secretary Amanda Bichard accompanied me to a meeting with the **Education Directorate's executive on 15 May.** The Empowering ACT schools model has now spread to all schools, up from the original trial group of 8 schools not very long ago. The Directorate is keen to hear feedback from **parents on how 'empowerment' is working at** their school. We provided useful feedback to the Directorate on a draft pamphlet they had prepared on the new assessment system for students.

Treasurer Hugh Boulter, Amanda Bichard and I met with Joy Burch (ACT Minister for Education) on 22 May. We expressed Council's disappointment that the Prime Minister is saying the ACT will get over the next 6 years \$500,000 for each government school but \$1.4m for each non-government school if it signs up to **the 'Gonski' school funding model** – we thought Gonski was to redress imbalances!

The Minister said this reflects the fact that the ACT Government has contributed a lot of money to government schools.

We also discussed our disappointment with the Learning Difficulties Taskforce, as it is **supposed to come up with 'revenue neutral'** recommendations, whereas spending money now will save more money later on. The **Minister said she hopes that the Taskforce's** outcomes will lead to us being better able to use the resources that are currently devoted to **learning difficulties, that is to 'work smarter'.**

The head of the Education Directorate, Diane Joseph, was also at the meeting and agreed to have the person responsible for school planning present to us at our next meeting with the Directorate. This followed concerns we expressed about the adequacy of government school planning particularly in the new **Molonglo area.**●

John Haydon  
Council's Acting President

# Private school approval process

*Continued from cover*

schools in the ACT needs to be well-planned, to ensure the best use of the education budget and that no waste or duplication of facilities occurs.

Until recently, Council remained under the impression that no decision had been made on the three new school applications. Due to the level of community interest, the public submissions made on this issue and amount of government funding that will be provided to these schools, the public should have been informed about the Minister's decision.

When approached with the issue of secrecy by the media, the Education Minister Joy Burch told ABC news that "I make decisions and there's business going on each and every day and we don't make a public comment about it". The decision has now been published on the Education and Training Directorate's website.

Council's greatest concern is the viability of existing public schools in these areas. Enrolments in these new schools will withdraw students from existing schools in West Belconnen and threaten their future.

Many of the public schools surrounding these new campuses have vacant positions. West Belconnen was also a focus of school closures during 2006. The Brindabella Christian College campus will be established just over 1km from the old Flynn Primary School, which was closed in December 2006 despite community requests to keep it open.

As recently as 2008, the previous Education Minister Andrew Barr rejected an application for a Christian School in West Belconnen as there was no evidence to support the anticipated level of enrolments. When the application for the Emmaus school was rejected, Mr Barr quoted the considerations under the *Education Act 2004* and said that approving the school could undermine the viability of existing schools in the area, including existing Catholic schools.

Neither the Education Minister nor these applications have provided any evidence that the population trends or potential enrolment from the West Belconnen had changed since 2008. Brindabella Christian College only supplied

evidence of 31 potential enrolments.

The Canberra Christian College application provided merely two indicative enrolments, both of which were from parents who have children currently enrolled at their Mawson campus. Al Taqwa is the only institution to provide strong evidence of community demand, with 180 families providing enrolment interest. In fact, the Al Taqwa application appears to be the only one that has completed the requirements of the application form.

By applying for a 'new campus' rather than a 'new school', private schools can massively increase the government funds they receive thanks to the Howard funding arrangements which 'lock in' existing funding levels.

**"Some of these campuses are up to 10km away from the original school and will cater to a student cohort significantly larger than the original schools capacity. That's not a new campus, that's a new school," said Mr Haydon.**

When approached with public concern, the ACT Chief Minister Katy Gallagher made it clear that the decision to grant approval would not be overturned despite requests for review by Council, Save Our Schools and the Australian Education Union. Attention now turns to the decision making process and possible changes to the *Education Act 2004*.

**"The Act needs changing to improve the transparency of this process. Rigorous and fair criteria for approval of non-government schools need to be included in the Act. Public money is being spent to fund these new campuses and the public has a right to know about them," said Mr Haydon.**

A joint letter, signed by Council, the Education Union and Save Our Schools, was delivered to the Education Minister and Chief Minister requesting an open, independent review of the process for the approval and registration of new private schools.

Council Acting President John Haydon has prepared concerns about the existing provisions under the *Education Act 2004*, which can be **read on page 4.**

# Registration of non-government schools in the ACT: what is wrong with the Education Act.

Non-government schools in the ACT must be registered or provisionally registered under the Education Act 2004 (the Act). There are a number of flaws in the Act as it is currently constituted.

A body or group of people intending to establish a non-government school, establish an additional campus of an existing school or teach at additional educational level/s must first obtain from the Education Minister in-principle approval for the proposed change. The proposed date of the change coming into effect must be at least 2 years but not more than 4 years from the date of application to the Minister. The Government must publish notice of the application in a daily newspaper and give at least 60 days for interested parties to make written submissions to the Minister.

## Application process is not transparent

A copy of the application must be made available 'for inspection' at an office of the Education Directorate. Recent practice by the Directorate has been that no copies can be made for



interested parties such as P&C Council to show to their members but that all persons wishing to see the application must physically visit the particular office at which the one copy is held and make notes from that single copy. This runs counter to open and transparent government.

In determining the application, the Act provides that the Minister must consider the effect of the application on existing schools, the level of demand in the area, the level of interest shown by the proposed school community for the proposed change, and any submissions by interested parties. The Minister then either gives or refuses to give in-principle approval, setting out her reasons in written advice which must, similarly to above, be available for inspection.

## Public announcement is not required

However there is no requirement to inform the public or even those who made submissions regarding the application that the Minister has made a decision. Recent practice has been to not advise the public nor inform those who made submissions, so that they are unaware of the Minister having made a decision and consequently do not take themselves to the requisite office to discover the reasons for the decision. This also runs counter to open and transparent government.

## Lack of information

Another problem is that it is not required that applications state where the school is to be located at this stage of seeking in-principle approval. For example a recent application for **in-principle approval** gave **'Belconnen area or Gungahlin area'** as the likely location, which would logically make it very difficult for the Minister to assess the effect on existing schools, the level of demand in the area or the level of interest shown by the proposed school community. Nevertheless this application was approved in-principle.



## New campus benefits

There are two further stages, namely provisional registration and registration, both of which are dealt with similarly by the Act. Both stages can relate to either a new school or a new campus of an existing school. The chief advantage for the new private school of applying **for a new 'campus' is that even if the campus is 20 kilometres away from the existing school it will attract the advantageous Commonwealth funding of the existing school under the 'no loss' provisions of the Howard funding model.** Council believes the ability to apply for a new campus when to all intents and purposes it is a new school is a rort, unjustly swelling the coffers of non-government schools.

## No invitation for consultation

At both provisional and final registration stages the Government must publish notice of the application in a daily newspaper and a copy of the application must be made available 'for inspection' at an office of the Education Directorate. The Act does not require that public submissions are invited at this stage of the registration process. Perhaps the logic of those drafting the Act was that submissions were invited at the earlier in-principle approval stage and that it was not necessary for them to be sought again. However, as described above, at the earlier stage the location of the proposed school may be unknown. This means that some interested parties may not be aware whether they will be impacted by the new school and those parties that believe they will be affected by the new school or campus will be unable to properly assess the nature or level of the impact.

## Access to reports

The Minister has to appoint a panel to advise her on an application for provisional registration or registration. Panels have to prepare a report advising the Minister on the satisfaction or otherwise of various criteria such as the curriculum, nature and content of the education to be offered, safety and welfare of students, and financial viability. These reports must be available for inspection at an office of the Education Directorate and a copy must be provided to interested persons at a reasonable cost. It is possible the drafters of the legislation provided for copies to be made available to interested parties at this stage because it is copies of a report written by a body appointed by

the Government and hence is in the public domain. To make copies available of the actual applications at each of the three registration stages may have been seen as infringing on the privacy of non-government corporations (the proprietor of a school must be a corporation). However this sits oddly with making copies available for inspection and allowing the taking of notes about the application. It should be possible to make the applying corporation waive its right to privacy when it is applying for permission to open a new school or campus, as it is necessary for it to do so to make the process open and transparent to all affected parties.

## No review process

There are serious deficiencies in the review of decisions sections of the Act. There are appeal rights at all three registration decisions (in-principle, provisional and final registration) of the Minister, but only if she refuses an application, and appeals can only be made by the applying body. No appeal is possible against a decision to grant an application, even if the decision is prima facie seriously in error – for example what constitutes a sufficient level of interest shown by the proposed school **community is left entirely at the Minister's discretion** and going by a recent example could be a few as seven families expressing interest, with some of those families located in Sydney.

It would seem that the drafters of the legislation did not envisage that any persons would have an interest in an application for a new school or campus not being approved, and so made no provision for appeals against approvals by the Minister. P&C Council represents the parents of students at government schools, and these schools may well be adversely impacted by nearby new non-government schools or campuses. Therefore Council believes that it may be a party having an interest in some applications not being approved. There may **well be other such parties.** ●

By John Haydon

*Council's Acting President*

# Working with Vulnerable People

The *Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checks) Act 2011* was introduced in late 2012, and is being phased in over a 6 year period.

Council asked the Education Directorate whether this will affect volunteers on school P&Cs. The Directorate has advised that it is possible volunteers will need to apply for a background check through the office of regulatory services. More information will be provided to Council towards the end of term 2, but in the meantime, here is what Council currently knows.

Background checks aim to protect children and **other vulnerable people by assessing applicants'** past behaviour to determine whether they pose a risk. A centralised system ensures that a minimum level of checking is required across the board and also allows flexibility for volunteers and employees to move amongst or take on additional work with vulnerable people without the need for further checks.

Parents and carers who volunteer with children in regulated activities may need to be registered under the Act. Regulated activities are defined in the Act, and include educational services, childcare, coaching and tuition. Generally, any individual who works or volunteers with children or other vulnerable people in regulated activities on a regular basis will need to register. There are a number of exceptions, such as occasional contact (no more than 7 days in a 12-month period).

More information about regulated activities and registration exemptions can be found on the Office of Regulatory Services website. If registration is needed, parents should ensure they apply for registration as soon as possible in order to be registered by the relevant deadlines.

Applying for registration under the Act is simple. Fill in the application form (available from the Office of Regulatory Services) and provide the appropriate identification and a passport sized photo.

By completing and signing the application form consent is given to access information related to criminal offences which will be used to conduct a risk assessment. Applications can be lodged in

person at Canberra Connect shop fronts or via post.

There is no cost for registration for volunteers, unless they also have contact with vulnerable people in regulated activities as part of paid employment.

Applications are generally processed fairly quickly (ie within a week), however it may take longer particularly during busy periods, so it is advisable to allow ample time.

Parents and carers who volunteer with children or who may do so in the near future are advised to apply for registration, even if they are currently exempt, in order to simplify the process. This will also ensure the new regulations do not restrict parent participation in education. Exemptions for occasional contact and in some circumstances where volunteers are close relatives of the vulnerable person will hopefully also help minimise this problem.

Parents and carers can also help the Act keep their children safe by understanding how it works and reporting any issues to the Office of Regulatory Services. From November, individuals involved in regulated activities with children will be required to be registered and produce their registration card if asked.

The Office of Regulatory Services website has additional information about the Act, fact sheets (including information on what are considered regulated activities, when registration is required for different groups and exemptions to registration requirements) and answers to frequently asked questions See [www.ors.act.gov.au/community/working\\_with\\_vulnerable\\_people](http://www.ors.act.gov.au/community/working_with_vulnerable_people).

There is also a quiz to determine whether an individual is required to be registered [www.ors.act.gov.au/community/working\\_with\\_vulnerable\\_people/am\\_i\\_required\\_to\\_be\\_registered](http://www.ors.act.gov.au/community/working_with_vulnerable_people/am_i_required_to_be_registered).●

By Sulenna Nicholson

*Council's Administrative Assistant*

# Gonski in an Elec-

As the federal election draws ever nearer the issue of school funding and the recommendations coming from the Gonski review are starting to take centre stage. In the first week of school holidays, as families were leaving for a much needed break, leaders from around Australia descended on Canberra to discuss the funding of education as part of the Council of Australian Governments.

The week kicked off on Sunday 14 April with an event hosted by the Prime Minister at the Lodge with parents, teachers, principals and importantly school children in support of Gonski.

On Monday 15 April Prime Minister Gillard unveiled the long awaited details of the plan. **Under the government's plan funding in education would be increased by \$14.5 billion over 6 years.** Though this falls woefully short of what the Gonski report initially envisioned it is an important start.

However Gonski is not just about the end of the day dollar amount. Gonski is about redesigning the funding model to increase equity, transparency and allow for future funding increase to be properly targeted. To this regard **the government's announcement was warmly received by Council.**

What followed this announcement on Monday was a week of hard lobbying by the government to try to get the states to sign up to the deal. Unfortunately the week ended on a disappointing note with no state or territory government, including the ACT, committing to **the government's proposed funding model.**

Despite this initial setback the government has stood by its reforms. The Prime Minister has set June 30 as the deadline for states to sign up to the Gonski funding reforms and has been busy promoting the reforms around the country. On 23 April the NSW government signed up to the Gonski reforms recognising the benefits of the new funding system. Other states such as South Australia appear likely to sign up to the Gonski reforms in the coming weeks.

On 30 May the ACT Government signed up to the Gonski reforms at Lyneham High School.



Under the plan ACT schools will get an additional \$190 million over six years with \$87 million coming from federal coffers and \$103 million from ACT coffers. The funding will see a lift to all schools in the ACT as their funding is brought up to the national School Resource Standard by 2019 with public schools expected to net around \$100 million, an outcome Council is pleased to see.

The government also appears to be drawing a clear distinction between themselves and the **Coalition in the run up to September's election** over this issue. Prime Minister Julia Gillard has been trying to demonstrate the difference between how schools will fare under a Labor government as opposed to under a Coalition government.

The federal coalition has yet to offer its support for the Gonski funding model leaving a significant question mark over the future of the reforms should the Coalition win in September. Council, along with a number of other peak education bodies, have called on the Coalition to support the Gonski reforms. Education should be above politics, especially in an election year.●

By Tim Lawley

*Council's Policy Officer*

# ACT budget announced

The ACT Budget was delivered on 4 June 2013 with mixed results for ACT government schools. Total expenditure on public education rises to \$548.5m, an increase of 4% or \$22.3m on the 2012-13 budget, which will represent an extra \$22.3m in recurrent funding.

## Increase to private school funding

Council was surprised to see that the total ACT and Federal Government expenditure on private schools has increased 8.1%, double that received by public schools.

It is well recognised that government schools are under resourced compared to many private schools. **Council's Acting President John Haydon says that "by increasing the expenditure on private schools at twice the rate as public schools, little is being done to redress the imbalance."**

Private schools can expect to receive more than \$19 million in additional funding initiatives over the next year. An increase that is largely due to the Gonski commitment made by ACT Government.

## Savings by the Education and Training Directorate

The directorate is required to make \$6.2million in savings in this budget, the largest saving requirement required of any ACT directorate. Education Minister Joy Burch MLA was quick to announce that savings will be found in efficiencies and natural attrition, not through school services or forced redundancies.

## Canteens

A grant of \$200,000 has been put forward to Council to help ease the stress on school canteens. This funding will help improve the management of canteens and introduce an online ordering system, turning school canteens into more efficient operations.

**"A good canteen can be the social centre of the school and also helps to combat obesity by providing healthy food for kids. This is great news for parents and children,"** said John Haydon.

Council office staff and executive are now engaging in discussions with the ACT Education and Training Directorate to get the ball rolling on the grant. Hopefully Council will be able to provide P&Cs more information soon.

In addition to the assistance for Canteens, \$500,000 will be used to provide water refill stations across selected government schools. **This funding is a part of the government's objective to provide and promote nutritional options in ACT schools, and to phase out sugary drinks from school canteens.**

## Students with a Disability

**In Council's budget submission, Council stressed the need for further support services for students with a disability.**

Now there has been an additional \$1.3m dedicated to the provision of classroom support services for students with a disability. A further \$1.3m has been earmarked to help students with a disability get to and from government schools.

## Introductory English Centre

**Another key focus of Council's budget submission was services for students for whom English is an additional language or dialect (EALD students).**

In 2012, the Education and Training Directorate launched a review into the provision of support for EALD students. Council were concerned about the number of students who were identified with having a less than average native speaker English ability, but were not supported by EALD funding. Council advocated that the treasury implement the recommendations by the ACT Language Forum and address the needs of these students.

Council was delighted to see the budget has allocated an additional \$1.8m to Wanniasa Hills Primary School over 2 years to help students from migrant and refugee backgrounds with limited or no English skills.

## Capital works

The budget allocated \$80m in capital works



projects throughout ACT public schools. This includes \$10m to improve computer and IT networks in schools. A further \$3m has been assigned to improving school infrastructure and bringing public schools into the 21st century.

### Road safety and improving student transport

It was disappointing to see that the budget failed to adequately address parental concerns over the road safety at schools. Last year, Council conducted a survey that revealed parents were concerned about drivers speeding through school zones, the lack of pickup/drop off facilities and drivers failing to stop at flagged crossings. Council proposed numerous initiatives to Treasury to address these issues; more appropriate signage, increased drop off areas and more appropriate crossing facilities.

During the 2012 ACT election, both major parties noted the concerns of parents and Council. Despite this acknowledgement, the government failed to properly address the problem by budgeting for any new initiatives.

Council called on Treasury to make funding arrangements to address school bus services and active travel, as well as road safety. Addressing each of these concerns will have a positive impact on the others. Council recommended that transport should be viewed as a single issue requiring a whole of government response.

Unfortunately, no money was earmarked to conduct the necessary study and network redesign to address these problems.

### Design for new Coombs Primary School

The budget allocated \$550,000 to finalise the plans for a new Coombs Primary School that is set to be built in Molonglo.

Although Council is please to see that this area will be serviced by a public school, the timing is concerning. Molonglo Valley has many new occupied houses, and Council is concerned that the children in these houses will not be able to attend a nearby public school for some years.

### Secondary Bursary Scheme

The Secondary Bursary Scheme provides financial assistance to low income families to help with the burden of educational expenses of

students in years 7-10.

Payments have previously been \$500 to each eligible family, and this will increase to \$750 a year under the new budget.

### School infrastructure

In its budget submission, Council highlighted the need to improve school facilities and aging school infrastructure.

Prior to the 2012 ACT election, ACT Labor committed \$70m to upgrade existing school infrastructure and \$28m to refurbish Belconnen High School. ACT Labor committed to addressing issues such as the upgrade of existing classrooms, building new classrooms where necessary, funding better furnishings, equipment upgrades, play area upgrades, soft fall surfaces, refurbishing toilets and proving new rainwater tanks and school gardens.

Council sees these upgrades as vital. It has been **Council's experience in the past that much** needed upgrades and refurbishments have been delayed due to a lack of funding available to the Education and Training Directorate.

The budget appears to have only allocated \$3.3m to the upgrade, repairs and maintenance of public schools. Therefore, Council is hoping that subsequent budgets during this parliamentary term will see further funds to address aging school infrastructure.

### Promoting public participation

During the 2012 ACT Election, all parties acknowledged the important role that parents played in the education process. Unfortunately the budget has failed to fund any additional campaigns to support and promote parent participation in education.

### Retention and training of specialist teachers

Finally, Council urged Treasury to dedicate funding to implement a retention and training policy for specialist teachers.

Although this proposal was not accepted, the budget has allocated \$3.5m to support experienced teachers to increase their professional qualifications and undertake **research.**●

# Sustainable school news

## AuSSI ACT

The Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative (AuSSI) is delivered through the ACT Government ACTSmart Program. The AuSSI is a partnership between the Australian Government and the States and Territories that supports schools to work towards a sustainable future.

The AuSSI is holistic, employing an integrated approach to environmental management involving the whole school site, the whole school community and all aspects of the curriculum. It aims for sustainable management to be embedded in everyday school operations and focuses on improving the management of energy, waste, water and school grounds/ biodiversity. It addresses educational, social and economic issues associated with the sustainable management of a school.

Every school in the ACT has signed up to the initiative and has committed to create a more sustainable future.

To support schools AuSSI ACT offers:

- Best Practice Guides – step-by-step actions on how to reduce energy and water consumption, establish a waste and recycling system, manage school grounds and biodiversity and educate students through the curriculum
- professional development workshops on the sustainable management of energy, water and waste, developing a School Environmental Management Plan (SEMP), establishing environment centres/areas, and implementing the Australian Curriculum Sustainability Priority
- support to conduct water, waste and/or energy audits and reviews of school grounds and curriculum
- access to support programs and a range of resources for staff and students
- access to a network of schools implementing sustainability initiatives
- an accreditation scheme that rewards school achievements.

For more information contact the AuSSI ACT Coordinator, Jenny Dibley, on 6207 6430 [jenny.dibley@act.gov.au](mailto:jenny.dibley@act.gov.au), call Council's office, or visit [sustainableschools.act.gov.au](http://sustainableschools.act.gov.au) •

## Planet Ark National Tree Day

Get Outside and Grow - National Tree Day, July 28 & Schools Tree Day, July 26.

Research from Planet Ark's 2012 Planting Trees report showed the contact with nature helps kids to thrive intellectually, emotionally, physically and ethically. Your school can join in **and be part of the country's largest community tree planting and nature-care event.** You'll be joining thousands of community groups, sport clubs, faith groups and families, in making a difference to your community, fostering a love of nature and creating positive environmental change.

Schools Tree Day is on Friday 26 July 2013, although events can be held at any time during the year. This year, 100 lucky schools can take part in a Bright Green Fundraiser selling Seedstickers for their school Tree Day event. Raise money in a responsible way, cover the cost of your plants and seedlings while engaging students, neighbours and local businesses in a fun and educational way to green your school. Email [treeday@planetark.org](mailto:treeday@planetark.org) to get some more information including how to get started.

The Treeday website has a great list of School Tree Day stories, School Activity Guides, templates for games, teachers resources and much more.

This year you will be part of a milestone event to plant the 20-millionth seedling since the campaign started in 1996. Dig in and register at [treeday.planetark.org](http://treeday.planetark.org) or call 1300 88 5000. •



School children participating in Planet Ark Schools Tree Day

# P&C Council training 2013

This year, P&C Council has revised its training workshops to incorporate the work of the SCIP (Schools and Communities in Partnership) Committee. Previous SCIP workshops provided information, assistance and creative ideas for the effective management of P&C associations.

Council will now be running a series of information workshops. Each workshop has been divided into five 30 minute modules, each focusing on a different area of effective P&C management.

Entire workshops will run for 2.5 hours, but participants are welcome to attend for any of the individual modules if they prefer.

Module 1: The basics - "who, how and whys of the P&C".

This session broadly covers the general roles of the P&C, its terms of function and responsibilities.

Module 2: Recruiting support, promotions and fundraising - "the do and don'ts".

This session will provide ideas about how to recruit support in schools, getting your message out to parents and fundraising ideas.

Module 3: P&C school committee roles and responsibilities - "your role on the team".

This session focuses in detail on the roles and responsibilities that come with office bearer possible in your P&C; president, secretary and treasurer.

Module 4: Improving management and organisation skills - "all things paperwork".

This session focuses on keeping accurate records, support services available and how Council staff can help. It will also address ideas about collecting and using feedback from your P&C events.

Module 5: P&C as a functioning community - "raising voices".

This session has two components; expanding your P&C to operate as an employer and raising your voice in the community.

There will be discussion time in each module for any questions.

Workshop dates:

Thursday 27 June 2013

6.00pm - 8.30pm

Hedley Beare Centre for Teaching and Learning  
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling

Saturday 29 June 2013

2.00pm - 4.30pm

Sports House  
100 Maitland Street, Hackett

Thursday 1 August 2013

6.00pm - 8.30pm

Hedley Beare Centre for Teaching and Learning  
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling

Saturday 3 August 2013

2.00pm - 4.30pm

Sports House  
100 Maitland Street, Hackett

*RSVP for workshops is essential. Please contact Council's office on 6241 5759, visit our website or email [contact@actparents.org.au](mailto:contact@actparents.org.au) if you would like to attend.*

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## Council affiliation invoices

Council Affiliation invoices and forms have been distributed to all P&Cs. Please keep an eye out for these in the school's internal mail over the next week or two.

Forms have been pre-filled with data from the ACT School Census 2013. Please check the form against the census data available on the Education and Training Directorate website to ensure the P&C has been invoiced correctly.

When paying by direct-debt, P&Cs must use their school's code in the subject or payee field. Please note that some have changed from last year, and a new list has been provided with the invoice.

If you have any questions about the payment of affiliation fees, or believe that Council has billed you the incorrect amount, please contact our office via [contact@actparents.org.au](mailto:contact@actparents.org.au)

# Events

- 25 Jun Council Hot Topics / General Meeting  
7.00pm - 9.30pm  
*Multipurpose Room,  
Hedley Beare Centre for  
Teaching and Learning  
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling.*
- 27 Jun P&C Management training  
6.00pm—8.30pm  
*Multipurpose Room,  
Hedley Beare Centre for  
Teaching and Learning  
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling.*
- 29 Jun P&C Management training  
2.00pm-4.30pm  
*Sports House  
100 Maitland Street, Hackett*
- 8 Jul Council office closes for term break
- 22 Jul Council office opens for term 3
- 27 Aug Annual Policy Conference & Council General Meeting  
7.00pm - 9.30pm  
Council's primary policy development event. All members are welcome.  
A short general meeting will follow.  
*Multipurpose Room,  
Hedley Beare Centre for  
Teaching and Learning  
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling.*
- 24 Oct Council Hot Topics / General Meeting  
7.00pm - 9.30pm  
*Multipurpose Room,  
Hedley Beare Centre for  
Teaching and Learning  
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling.*
- 30 Oct Council office closes for term break
- 14 Oct Council office opens for term 4
- 17 Oct ACCSO National Conference, hosted by Council opens  
*Hedley Beare Centre for  
Teaching and Learning  
51 Fremantle Drive Stirling*

# About us

ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations is the representative body for Parent & Citizen associations in the ACT.

We represent over 60,000 parents in 85 ACT public schools.

## About our magazine

*ParentAction* is a free journal published four times a year. Distribution: 1550 copies - the ACT Legislative Assembly, ACT Government School Boards and P&Cs, public education organisations and interstate parent associations.

Contributions, advertising and feedback are always being sought. Contributions can be emailed directly to the Editor, Jena Dobie, at [jdobie@actparents.org.au](mailto:jdobie@actparents.org.au). Views expressed in this journal are not necessarily those of the ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations.

# Our Executive

President:	Viv Pearce
Vice Presidents:	Jenny Maskell & John Haydon
Secretary:	Cecilia Shlegel
Assist. Secretary:	Amanda Bichard
Treasurer:	Hugh Boulter
Committee:	Graeme Evans, Donna Reed, Joan Kellett, Mark O'Neill, Karen McLaughlin, Amadu Barrie, Amanda Falconer & Denis O'Dea.

## Life Members

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

# Contact us

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Closed public holidays and school holidays