

**Please provide a brief summary of your suggestions, if any, which relate to Budget expenditure, capital priorities, savings measure, revenue raising or other. (2000 characters)**

Week of the School Community: In 2014, Council, in conjunction with local P&Cs, will be holding a Week of the School Community. Council, local P&Cs and schools will be holding events throughout the week aimed at growing the school community. Council requests a one off grant of \$20,000 to effectively promote the Week of the School Community and associated events.

Computer upgrade: With the introduction of SchoolsNET there is a significant need to update computers over 4 years of age. Council would like to see appropriate funding for the upgrading of all computers over 4 years of age.

P&C Deed of Grant: Council's current grant expires on 30 June 2014. Council see's it work as providing a valuable role to the school and ACT community. Council is largely funded by grants from the government and would like to see appropriate funding set aside in the budget so Council can renegotiate its grant with ETD.

Everyone Everyday: The *Everyone, Everyday* disability awareness program has received a positive reception. Council would like to see this program rolled out to all government schools. Council would like to see \$200,000 over four years given to ETD to allow them to carry on this successful program.

Ongoing support for Canteens: Council is currently in the process of acting on the recommendations from the Ministers Taskforce on Canteens. However, with the loss of the ACT Canteen Association in July of this year there is a void for ongoing support to canteens. Council would like to see an appropriate organisation funded to provide ongoing support.

Specialist Teachers: Specialist teachers are becoming increasingly rare. Council would like to see funding for training and employment of more of these teachers, in particular at the primary school level.

Nutrition Australia (ACT): The ACT branch of Nutrition Australia provides a valuable role in ACT schools. Council would like to see appropriate funding go towards Nutrition Australia so it can carry on its role.

**What services do you believe are most important for the Territory? (2000 characters)**

Providing a free, quality public education system is essential to the long term prosperity of the ACT. Council's central concern is improvement of the education sector.

Countless studies have shown that increased levels of education, school attendance and school completion have a positive impact on future budgets due to the increased earning capacity of individuals and lower reliance on government services.

One of the most significant challenges the ACT Treasury and ETD will have in the 2014-15 budget cycle is the proper implementation of the Gonski funding model. This model was designed in large part to increase equity in the funding system. Ensuring this takes place will be of crucial importance and the 2014-15 budget presents an excellent opportunity to see that this does occur.

**What infrastructure priorities should the Government consider initiating in the next four years? (2000 characters)**

Infrastructure is more than just bricks, mortar and roads. As we continue through the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century ICT infrastructure is becoming just as important as its conventional counterpart.

Increasing the ICT infrastructure in schools is essential as the learning experience shifts online. Ensuring all computers are up to date and can run the required software / programs is an important first step. Additionally there needs to be an appropriate level of support for new ICT systems. The 2014-2015 budget should recognise the importance of ICT in schools and make appropriate investments in updating the existing system.

Additionally Council is concerned over reports of parents being asked to fund tablets and other ICT devices in the classroom. If such devices are required for the learning experience there should be appropriate funding in ETDs budget to allow them to provide these devices.

Beyond ICT there are other important infrastructure priorities the budget should address.

The continued modernisation and upgrade of existing school infrastructure is essential. During the 2013 election campaign the government committed to funding over \$90 million of additional upgrades for existing schools. The 2013-14 budget made a start on this however considerable work remains to be done.

Over the next four years the government must commit itself to ensuring every government school in the ACT is of a high standard, not just in terms of educational outcomes, but also in terms of the schools' infrastructure, facilities and amenities. In line with the government's election commitment Council would like to see an additional and recurring \$15 million budgeted for upgrading and modernising existing schools.

**How can the Government deliver current services more efficiently and productively? (having particular regard to any expenditure suggestions you may have made above) (2000 characters)**

**Are there any new ways to generate revenue and/or services you consider that the community should make a direct contribution to (a fee for service)? (2000 characters)**

In 2012 the ACT government recognised that every child has the right to access free, school education appropriate to their needs. This became law on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2013 in the form of section 27A of the *Human Rights Act 2004* (ACT).

It has been common practice that from time to time schools request voluntary contributions from parents. Council supports the voluntary nature of these contributions and encourages parents to make such contributions when they can. However, such contributions should not be used to purchase essential supplies, materials and equipment for legitimate educational purposes. Such items should be budgeted for by the government.

Likewise it has been suggested by some principles that canteens should be used as a way to generate additional revenue for the schools. Council is opposed to this point of view. Canteens play an important role in the school, beyond simply making money, this is especially true in the case of P&C operated canteens.

In looking for ways to generate additional revenue this budget should look beyond the school environment.

**Could the Government stop providing particular services? (having particular regard to any expenditure suggestions you may have made above) (2000 characters)**

