



## School traffic in the spotlight

**A new government program aims to address traffic problems around schools while getting more kids walking and riding to school.**

In 1970, most Canberra students walked or rode to school (60%). Relatively few (12%) travelled by car. Now, however, most children get to school in a car (probably around 60%) while only a quarter regularly walk or ride.

As well as improving children's fitness, physical development, healthy weight, mental health and even cognitive function, walking or riding is also good news for the environment, the local community and for traffic flow around schools.

Problems with traffic and parking around schools were highlighted last year when a survey conducted by Council showed that the majority of parents consider roads around their school unsafe, parking and set-down difficult and traffic volumes unmanageable. Council has also lobbied for years for improvements to school roads.

The government's new Active Streets Pilot is seeking to address these traffic problems and raise the number of children using active travel – walking, riding or skating – to get to school.

The Pilot is a joint initiative of ACT Health, Territory and Municipal Services (TAMs), ACT Roads, Justice and Community Services (JACS), and ETD (Education and Training Directorate).

### Testing new initiatives

The Active Streets Pilot is now operating in four

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*Busier footpaths could mean fewer traffic headaches.*

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# From the President



*John Haydon*

## **Some good news**

For many years the media have used freedom of information (FOI) requests to obtain details on 'incidents' (eg student violence) at ACT public schools and then written articles that needlessly caused parents to have concerns for the safety of their children at school. Similar information was not available for private schools (not subject to FOI provisions) so public schools were portrayed in a bad light. In addition, public schools are bound to strict protocols to report incidents, whereas private schools have every incentive to keep them out of the media spotlight.

The Minister has now obtained agreement with independent and Catholic schools that they use the same reporting threshold for incidents as public schools. Time will tell how well this works because how any particular incident is defined and described cannot be totally objective. There is hope however that an annually recurring injustice to the image of public schools may be removed.

## **And not so good**

One of Council's policies is that schooling should be accessible to all, free, and secular. The Federal Government recently floated the idea of charging high-income parents if their children attend public schools. We strongly oppose this idea. One of its many unfortunate consequences is that any public school fees will make private schools 'cheaper' in comparison – a smaller additional outlay – for high income families. The end result would be a reduction in the socio-economic diversity in public schools.

## **Be careful what you wish for!**

Government is about making choices – do we spend money on schools or roads/buses/sewage treatment/Mr Fluffy houses, and how much? Council lobbies government to provide more and better support for public schools but we have to acknowledge that the next budget is not going to double its allocation for public schools, nor hopefully halve it. There are practical limits to the amount that can be spent on any one activity and

all governments have finite resources.

The Shaddock review is now underway after Council called for a serious investigation into school withdrawal spaces and behaviour management practices after revelations that a child was kept in what the Education Directorate refers to as 'an inappropriate structure', more emotively described in the media as a 'cage'.

A knee-jerk reaction by Council could have been to call for greater resources for students with challenging behaviour, and indeed I think schools do not have enough resources available to them to deal with this issue. The sad reality though is that if more resources are devoted to this issue, some other area of education will have its resources reduced. It will be very interesting to see what the Shaddock review recommends. Council has made a submission to the review but this is an area where there are no easy answers. Students with challenging behaviour have a right to an education and their classmates and teachers have a right to be safe at school.

## **Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde**

I think Council could be said to have a 'split' personality, or at least two quite different roles. Your view of Council is likely to depend on who you are. For most members of P&Cs, it is Council's role to support its constituent associations – the P&Cs in ACT public schools. Council does this by running workshops and meetings, providing advice, arranging insurance and taking up any issues P&Cs want addressed. People in the media however, who seek comment from Council, see our role somewhat differently, as probably do the members of the Education Directorate and the ACT Government with whom we meet to provide feedback and seek to influence their views and actions. For them, we are representatives of parents with children in ACT public schools.

It is for this reason Council has registered new business names and may adopt a more media-friendly name for public comment purposes. If we do this we will retain our long-standing name as Council's official working title. ●

# Everyone everyday

**The Everyone Everyday program for promoting inclusion in schools was recently recognised with a national award for improving education outcomes.**

The program, developed here in the ACT, focuses on mainstream primary schools but has recently been extended to high schools in an innovative format. It builds on the school's existing work on social and emotional learning and aims to equip students with the skills and confidence they need to take action to include people with disability.

“Inclusion doesn't happen by osmosis,” explained Maureen Howe of Disability ACT, one of the program's designers. Instead, she says, inclusion needs to be explicitly taught if we are to move from a situation where children with disability are simply present in mainstream schools, to one where they are welcomed, valued, and enjoy full membership of the school community.

## **Everyone in primary schools**

The program is a comprehensive teaching resource, comprising 35 lessons linked to the Australian Curriculum.

The program assists schools – both teachers and students – to:

- become more aware of the needs of students with disability
- shift the focus from a deficit-based approach to a strength-based one in which their skills and attributes are valued
- take action to become more inclusive of children with disability
- understand that everyone gains in inclusive schools – both children with and without disability (research shows all children are better off academically and socially).

“I learnt to look at the world from the point of view of people with disabilities,” reported a Gowrie Primary student. “On the playground we modified the rules of handball so a boy with muscular dystrophy could join in and play”.

The program also includes accredited

professional development sessions for teachers which cover:

- philosophical and cultural shifts in ‘disability’ and ‘inclusion’
- examining their own beliefs and attitudes
- what the research shows about inclusive classrooms (and dismantling common myths)
- an overview of the Everyone Everyday program.

Feedback from teachers has been very positive.

## **Theatre for high school**

The Everybody Everyday program has been re-imagined and trialled in several Canberra high schools, using the Forum Theatre method. This is an interactive, problem-solving method where a group of actors with lived experience of a social issue create a short play about the issue with an ending that is clearly undesirable. They perform the piece twice and the audience is invited to call “stop!” and come on stage to replace one the actors to try and achieve a better outcome. It is a way for audience members to rehearse new behaviours and to gain an insight into the barriers and attitudes others face.

“The best aspect has been sharing my experience with others and hearing about other people's experience. It's affected how I have been able to interact with those students who don't have a disability and given me insight into how students see others,” explained one high school student.

Donna Sullivan, Acting Deputy Principal at Calwell High School says that students have “enjoyed taking part in the Everyone Everyday Forum Theatre project. Students are being challenged to think about disability and inclusion. The activities have all... enabled students to think, explore and respond with meaning. They are confronting both their own and societal attitudes towards the topic, whether it be intentional or non-intentional exclusion.”

Find out more about the program at [www.act.gov.au/everyoneeveryday](http://www.act.gov.au/everyoneeveryday). •

# School traffic in the spotlight

*continued from front page*

primary schools: Macgregor, Mt Rogers, Latham and Macquarie. Consultants are gathering information on the current situation, including observing family routines and attitudes, counting the number of pedestrians and cyclists, and measuring traffic volumes and speeds.

In term four of this year, ‘interventions’ will be introduced at each school based on the traffic and transport issues identified by these observations. New measurements will then be taken to see if the interventions have improved traffic congestion and safety, eased parking difficulties and increased active travel to school. Whether or not things have improved will then inform which changes could be useful at other schools.

The types of interventions that will be trialled will be driven by the ‘Four Es’:

- educating parents and students
- encouraging parents and students to do the ‘right thing’ and understand what benefits follow
- engineering solutions such as new road markings, crossings, traffic islands or signs near the school, 30km/hr zones, or even marking walk-to-school routes on local paths
- enforcement – higher fines, more parking checks and mobile speed cameras.

The government believes that taking an evidence-based approach like this will show which initiatives are best for increasing active travel and traffic safety and therefore how best to invest in the future to ease school traffic. Council will be watching keenly to see that the traffic situation around our schools does indeed improve.

## **New resources**

The government is also developing resources to help schools with their traffic issues. These will be available in 2016 and will include:

- a ‘how to’ guide for operating an effective ‘kiss and drop’ (pick-up/set-down) zone, including peer advice for principals from those who have already implemented successful programs
- a guide on how a school or P&C could

manage a crossing-supervisor program, including the types of training and certification required

- maps for parents of alternative parking places around each school (within 250m)
- ‘part-way OK’ walking maps for each school showing places up to 1km away from the school where parents can park (or drop-off students) and walk the rest of the way
- safety factsheets for schools to use to remind parents and children of safe behaviours.

## **Examining your school’s traffic**

Currently ETD is looking in detail at 25 schools, reviewing issues, collecting traffic data and listening to staff and parent concerns. The results of the Pilot will point the way towards the best solutions for each case – solutions that have been shown to improve traffic and increase walking and riding to school during the Pilot.

## **The P&C’s role**

Parents are key to changing attitudes to walking, parking and traffic, and to improving driver behaviour. P&Cs have a role to play in encouraging safe behaviours and this would be an excellent topic to explore, in collaboration with school executive staff, at a well-advertised P&C meeting. New resources and factsheets in the near future should be of assistance.

For schools being reviewed and examined in detail, a report about the specific traffic issues and how to approach them will be written. P&C presidents should have access to these reports when they are in the draft stage so that they can comment and have input.

## **Council’s role**

Council welcomes the Pilot, the planned new resources and the improved cooperation between government agencies. We encourage schools to be involved and to voice traffic concerns with ETD’s contact: Mr David Jones. We also urge P&Cs to continue to monitor the situation and to provide feedback to Council on progress and on the uptake of new resources as they become available. We look forward to some progress on this area of long-term concern. ●

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# Dyslexia: thinking outside the square

**Council recently purchased a new Australian resource to help parents and teachers better understand dyslexia — a set of DVDs titled ‘Outside the Square: Empowering children with dyslexia in our schools’.**

We had heard that this was a valuable resource, but there were mutterings in our smell-of-an-oily-rag office. Was it really worth the \$70 we paid?

Having watched all three DVDs, I can say without a doubt that it was money well spent, a revelation indeed, to me anyway.

The production of the DVDs was community driven by dyslexia support groups across the country, interestingly using crowd-source funding. Further funding was provided by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training and Minister Pyne gives an introduction to the first video. He is the father of two children with dyslexia and clearly has a genuine interest in the subject.

## **Understanding dyslexia**

If you just want a better understanding of dyslexia I recommend you watch the 43 minutes of disk one (called ‘Understanding and identifying dyslexia’), rather than the more specialised material on disks two and three. You will learn that dyslexia is difficulty with words and is due to a difference in the way the brains of those with dyslexia learn. It is not related to visual processing, can range from mild to severe, cannot be cured and does not disappear with age. Dyslexia needs to be identified early because reading affects all aspects of education and because early identification enables the necessary compensation mechanisms to be put in place.

Disk one is a pleasure to watch because some delightful dyslexic children of varying ages present it and they speak from their own experience. These are bright and capable kids, who just happen to have a problem with words.

Possibly ten per cent of us have dyslexia, which means there are usually two or three affected

students in each class. The video claims teachers are generally not well informed about dyslexia.

Badly handled, dyslexia can lead to anxiety, depression, higher rates of incarceration and unemployment, not because of the condition itself, but because of its effects on the ability of the person with dyslexia to formally learn and the subsequent loss of self-esteem. By grade nine many dyslexic children want to leave school.

The DVDs tell that people with dyslexia have a lot to offer society because they can generate new ideas and ‘think outside the square’, hence the title of the series.

The second DVD is titled ‘Targeted teaching for students with dyslexia’ and is really oriented towards teachers but would also be of great interest to parents with dyslexic children. The themes are giving extra time with a gap between each instruction, and multisensory work using as many senses as possible (visual, auditory and kinaesthetic). This latter teaching strategy is also valuable for children who do not have dyslexia. Assessments for students with dyslexia can be oral rather than print based, and assistive technology (software enabling speech to text and text to speech) has a big role to play.

## **Self esteem is key**

The main issue, according to the producers, is building self-esteem and developing resilience. The argument is once again made that the emotional impact of dyslexia is more important than the limitations the condition itself presents.

I found the material on dealing with negative self-talk and working out what you want for your life (and who of us has done that?) really interesting.

## **Teaching for dyslexia**

Curiously, dyslexia seems to disappear entirely from the third disk (‘Explicit teaching of language and literacy’). Claims made include that the way we are teaching literacy is at odds with the research: Australia has good researchers but the research is not getting through to teachers in

# Council membership: value for money

**It is that time of the year – when your P&C's membership fees for Council are due.**

We are pleased that our fees for member P&Cs have not increased for eight years! Invoices for Council affiliation fees were emailed and posted to P&C treasurers in May and are now due. P&Cs who have misplaced invoices should contact our office. Thanks to those who have already paid.

What are the advantages of being a member? Membership gives your association:

- support for running the P&C, including information, templates and resources, free

- workshops and over the phone advice
- reduced price insurance
- free publications with useful information
- representation of P&C and parent concerns to the Minister and the Education Directorate, resolution of problems and input to educational policy and decisions
- a regular forum to exchange ideas, share expertise and raise concerns with other P&Cs
- interesting guest speakers at our meetings
- access to the NSWBuy discount scheme.

To find out more, see our website or contact the office. Contact details are provided on page 11. •

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their teaching training, in which very little time is given to the teaching of reading.

Humans are hard-wired to talk and it comes easily to us, but we are not hard-wired to read and it has to be taught explicitly and systematically. Learning to read is not a natural activity. The program points out that the first three years of school need to be devoted to learning to read, but from then on we read to learn. Clearly a student who hasn't mastered reading in the first three years is going to have a hard time from then on.

This video comprehensively pans the 'whole language' approach to learning to read, disparagingly referring to it as 'the glance and catch method', even pointing out that it is loosely associated with the left wing of politics. On the right wing however we have 'phonics' where the component parts of words are spelt out. I confess to being astounded at seeing a grade one class being taught that we spell 'funny' with two 'n's because the 'u' in funny is short and 'y' makes vowels long but is unable to jump more than one consonant so the two 'n's protect the short 'u' from the pernicious 'y'. It was news to me. They did seem to understand it however.

At this point I would like to add that what I hear from people is that there are many different

opinions amongst educators as to the respective merits of phonics and whole language learning. For this reason, the third video is probably far too supportive of phonics, and the appropriate balance lies somewhere in the middle. A range of learning to read approaches is needed, with some students taking to reading easily and others needing the structure and rules of a phonics approach. This area is my only significant reservation with the three DVDs.

Some useful things in this disk, however, are one school principal saying our expectations of students in Australia are too low and for many years much learning has been 'play-based' and this has to change.

A tip for parents with really young children is that letter knowledge is a strong predictor of how they will go on to read – teach your children the alphabet before they go to school.

The message of this last DVD is that if kids are not learning, it's the teacher's fault. "A lot of kids take a lot of blame for poor teaching." •

John Haydon – Council President

*The three-disk series is available to borrow by contacting Council's office (contact details p 11) or for purchase from [www.outsidesquare.net](http://www.outsidesquare.net).*

# Conversations with books

Looking for ways to connect with your kids and the learning they do through reading? Read on.

So, what'd you think of the book?

*Good.*

Did you like the book?

*Yeah.*

What did you like about it?

*It was good.*

For a lot of parents, that's pretty much standard fare when it comes to talking about books with young readers. All you want is insight into their little brains — what's catching their interest, what's sparking their imagination, how they feel, what they think. And what you get, at best, is monosyllabic meaninglessness.

It can be super frustrating — even more so when you consider just how profound talking about the books we read can be.

Our youngest aren't just learning about characters or stories, but about language and social communication itself. "It's being talked with, not being talked at, that teaches children language". That's a quote from a New York Times article about whether eBooks count as screen time or reading — an issue to leave for another day.

Justin Reich, founder of EdTech Teacher, adds: "Part of the value of reading is in the conversations that emerge naturally, questions about words, pictures, and connections to everyday life."

What happens, then, if that natural conversation grows stilted? You just need a few tricks up your sleeve. Here are some easy conversations starters for every age and stage of reader.

## Toddlers and preschoolers

Talking about books with little kids usually goes pretty well. They're easily engaged, especially if you do all the voices. Still, it's important to establish the habit.

### *Point and ask*

Toddlers are unabashed know-it-alls. Stop mid-



***Sharing a book is not only one of life's simple pleasures. It can broaden vocabularies and lead to discussions about the world and people around us — a central theme to engaging effectively with your child's education.***

Photo courtesy Chiot's Run: [www.flickr.com/photos/chiotrun](http://www.flickr.com/photos/chiotrun)

story and ask them to name objects and colours. If they're old enough, they can count. "How many flowers?" It may seem distracting — and yes, it will drag out storytime — but it's vital for language development.

### *Make a prediction*

At this age, you can simply ask, "What happens next?" They've undoubtedly heard the story enough times to know, and repetition won't bother a three-year-old. This is the basis of story arc.

### *Pause — and let them fill the silence.*

With 'Goodnight Moon', for example, just say, "three little bears / sitting in..." and your little one will undoubtedly say "Chairs!" This works especially well with rhyming books.

### *Make real-life connections*

This trick is in the back pocket of every teacher worth his or her salt — and there's no reason you can't use it, too. If you're reading Mo Willem's 'Knuffle Bunny' for the umpteenth time, you can say, "Trixie has blonde hair. What colour is your hair?" "Trixie's lovey is called Knuffle Bunny. What is your lovey called?" If the dragons love tacos, what kind of food do four-year-olds love? Who else loves tacos?

### *Keep the story going*

Bring book characters into playtime. Really, it's

as simple as, “You be George; I’ll be the Man in the Yellow Hat.” And then see what happens. This kind of creative play helps children work over all the elements of storytelling — and you’ll get a nice glimpse at how their minds work, what details they think are important, and when they might go rogue.

### **School-aged children**

Once kids begin reading on their own or getting into chapters books, things finally get interesting — and, for some, rather quiet. For a lot of kids, reading is private. This is when to start honing your power to draw your child out.

#### *Discuss difficult words*

If your child is reading to you, it’s easy to stop and talk about words that are above their pay grade. Bring in the dictionary. Talk about words you are confused about, too — it makes it okay for her to not know.

#### *Make the questions personal*

At this stage, it’s time to move beyond basic plot-based questions like, “What do you think happens next?” You can invite them to engage a little more personally with the book, to see themselves in a situation. “What would you have done differently?” Explore how their motivations may be different from what’s on the page.

#### *Compare and contrast*

Early readers love book series, and series easily lend themselves to comparison. How was this book different from the last one you read?

#### *Avoid the book report questions*

There are many well-meaning lists of questions to ask young readers, with totally reasonable inquiries like, “What was the most exciting part?” “What was the saddest part” and “Were you surprised by anything? Why?” But your child gets a lot of this at school. If what you want is a true dialogue with your child, where you understand their point of view and help them see yours, the questions should go deeper and be more intimate.

#### *Make connections to the real world*

As the books they read become more complex, you can discuss more complex ideas — even tough concepts like death or prejudice. This is

when the conversations get really interesting, and fun.

#### *Just riff*

Especially if you’re reading aloud or reading together, conversation is easy. The unplanned, stream-of-consciousness discussions are the most authentic and most likely to be engaging.

### **Upper primary and beyond**

Kids this age are reading independently and choosing their own books, so you may have to do some legwork.

#### *Read what they read*

Even if you aren’t reading aloud or side by side, you can stay on top of what they’re thinking about by putting your nose in the same book — whether it’s comics, fantasy, or historical novels. You can’t offer insight or critique if you haven’t cracked the spine.

#### *Stay authentic*

The best conversations are knit together by the interests and points of view you share with your child — and where you differ. Share opinions, but as my daughter says, “Don’t yuck my yum.” In other words...

#### *Don’t judge*

Your child is developing their own worldview, trying on personas and values that didn’t necessarily spring up underneath your roof. That’s important — and good. Don’t squelch an opportunity to engage by dismissing your child’s take on a book or character as wrong or bad. You’re missing out on an opportunity to see how she or he ticks.

#### *You be you — a reader*

Bring your passion for books to the table, and let them learn by watching what you do. Read voraciously. Talk about the people, places, and things in your books. Be engaged — and you’ll engage them. ●

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*Brightly (www.readbrightly.com) is a US-based resource to help Mums and Dads raise lifelong readers. Brightly features book recommendations for every age and stage, reading tips and insights, seasonal inspirations, author essays, contests, and more.*

# At our P&C...

**Carolyn Fisher, former P&C President at Belconnen High, explains how the P&C re-branded and re-invented itself to better fit the challenges of high school.**

Several years ago, the P&C at Belconnen High School was faced with a dilemma – just what should their role in the school be? Up until that time the P&C had run the canteen, but with parents moving on, the expertise to do so had disappeared and the decision was made to outsource the canteen. Parents were still keen to be involved, to help the school in some way, but how?

Principal David McCarthy told the P&C that fundraising was not a priority, freeing the group to look at other roles.

“It is important for the P&C to have a clear role,” he says. “I’ve seen a negative cycle operate at high schools where busy parents can feel discouraged because they perceive that they are ‘not doing much’ for the school and once they feel discouraged, they stop coming to P&C meetings at all.”

After further discussions with parents and the Principal, the P&C decided that their most important role was facilitating the flow of information from the school to parents and back again. It was clear that while teachers communicated well with students about assessment and expectations, the kids were not necessarily passing on the information to parents. The P&C’s new role was to help the school communicate with parents, despite the teenagers!

“High school students seem to need less parent involvement,” explains Carolyn Fisher, “but appearances can be deceiving. Being further along the path to independence makes it trickier for parents to deliver invaluable input. This is the value of investing in the school community. It provides the crucial support, but indirectly.

Everyone benefits: your own children, other students, other parents and teachers.”

## **Rebranding the P&C**

To get away from the perception of the P&C as a fundraising body, or somewhere parents should avoid in case they were given a volunteer role, the P&C was renamed the “Parent Forum Group.” (This was formally structured a subcommittee of the P&C). As the name suggests, they began running parent information forums – one each term.

The first forum explored the topic of the teenage brain with the help of an expert guest speaker. It was facilitated by a parent and attended by key staff who were called upon at times to answer questions from the school’s perspective. It was a huge success, attracting 30 parents and generating useful discussion. Ways in which the school communicated with parents changed as a result of the conversation.

Other topics for the parent forums included:

- ‘getting organised’ – helping students plan their homework and organise themselves
- digital information and search technologies
- suggested changes to the school uniform
- mental health for teens
- a tour of the school.

The forums have helped parents to better understand their children, how the school works and how to help. They have given parents access to senior staff and the Principal and have provided useful information back to the school.

Out of one forum, a new resource was born. Carolyn, along with pastoral care staff at the school, wrote a new guide for students – the ‘Get Sorted’ handbook – and developed a student planner. These are now used throughout the school, encouraged regularly in classes and explicitly introduced to Year 7 students.

# 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 and carers in 86 ACT public schools.

## About our magazine

*ParentACTion is a free journal published four times a year. Distribution: Online plus hardcopy (600 copies to 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, Janelle Kennard, at [jkennard@actparents.org.au](mailto:jkennard@actparents.org.au).*

*Views expressed in this journal are not necessarily those of the ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations.*

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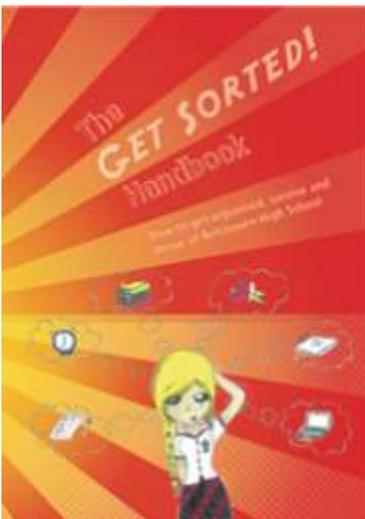
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*A valuable new resource for students and parents resulted from the P&C-run Parent Forums.*

## Tips for making it work

Carolyn suggests the following considerations for P&Cs looking to re-invent themselves.

- Be aware of what is possible and don't overreach. Aim for something manageable and sustainable given that parents are time-poor.
- Focus on what you identify as your core principles, on what you want to achieve. Are you trying to raise funds, or is there a different driver?
- The support of the principal is pivotal, and communication with them is key.
- Be open to setting-up events and trust that the rest will follow.

“If you get enough people, who all want the best for the kids, together in one room with the willingness to improve things and to learn, ideas will flow and things will come up that are fabulous, rewarding, and worth the effort,” she says.

“The P&C have provided something very valuable for the school – a way of better connecting parents to the school,” says Principal David McCarthy. “At the same time the forums have created a positive sense of purpose for the P&C, and so a stronger P&C – which is a great resource for me and for the school.” ●

# Dates to remember

**Aug 25 Policy Conference/Council General Meeting**

7.00pm - 9.30pm  
Centre for Teaching and Learning  
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling

**Sept 22 Council Hot Topics/General Meeting**

7.00pm - 9.30pm  
Centre for Teaching and Learning  
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling

**Sept 28 - Council office closed for term break**  
**Oct 9**

**Oct 27 Council General Meeting**

7.00pm - 9.30pm  
Centre for Teaching and Learning  
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling

**Oct 24-30 Children's week**

**Oct 30 Teacher Appreciation Day**

## Congratulations: Our friend of public education

The work of one of Council's long-term members – Vivienne Pearce – was recognised with a 'Friend of Public Education Award' in May.

The award was presented by the Australian Education Union (AEU) as part of Public Education Week.

Viv is a passionate advocate for parents and public education and everyone at Council congratulates her on this much-deserved award.

She is a long-standing member of the Council executive and has been the driving force behind several school P&Cs for over two decades.

It would be impossible to tally the number of volunteer hours that Viv has devoted to schools, and their communities, to education committees, parent representative forums and to helping other parents have their say.

This is the role of Council – to champion public education and advocate on behalf of public school parents – and Viv has been an invaluable part of that for years.

Viv has been one of the most active people in Canberra in lobbying for the implementation of



**Federal Member for Canberra, Gai Brodtmann, presents Viv Pearce with the AEU ACT Friend of Public Education Award.**

the Gonski report recommendations and, earlier, in opposing public school closures. She is a passionate supporter of improvements for special needs students, sustainable and safe schools, and curriculum review. Equally, she has fought against the misuse of NAPLAN data and reductions in specialist teachers.

Congratulations Viv, and thank you for your service to P&Cs, to Council and to public education. ●