



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**QON No.**  
**EDU 8**

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND YOUTH AFFAIRS  
MICHAEL PETERSSON MLA (CHAIR), ELIZABETH KICKERT MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), CHRIS STEEL MLA,  
ANDREW WALL MLA

**Inquiry into referred 2016–17 Annual and Financial Reports**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Asked by Mr Milligan MLA

In relation to:

**Koori Preschools**

1. The Australian Early Development Census shows an increase in the percentage of developmentally vulnerable Indigenous children in Canberra, from 36.6% in 2009 to 41.9% in 2015.
  - a. Can you explain this data in the light of the money being spend, and the hours of additional time spent at a Koori Centre?

**Primary schools**

2. P 25 – The Action Inquiry Program, run on 11 campuses, included a longitudinal numeracy study, oral language initiatives and so on. Can you tell me more about the outcomes of those studies?
  - a. What difference will they make, have they made to indigenous children?
3. P. 58 – why are there no indigenous figures for attendance and real retention included in the annual report? Either on this page or at the front?

**NAPLAN**

4. P. 29 - Can you explain why year 5 is not meeting the ACT targets, which are already well below those of their non-indigenous peers on p. 42?
  - a. The same for Year 9 on p. 30?
5. P. 44 gives the mean achievement scores for ACT year 10 students in the science literacy tests. Why is this not included for indigenous students?
  - a. Did they not attend the test?
  - b. Were their performances so low you did not wish to report them?
  - c. What are they?

**Year 12**

6. P. 57 - Why is there no graph for indigenous students studying or employed 6 months after leaving school? What is the number of indigenous school-leavers who have employment or are studying full time 6 months after finishing school?
7. According to the ATSI Social Health Atlas, indigenous participation rates per 100 in Vocational Education and training is below the Australian rate, in fact lower than other

capital cities. What is being done to encourage indigenous students to participate in Voc Ed?

MS YVETTE BERRY MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

- Q1. The difference between the 2009 and 2015 collection years against this indicator is not statistically significant due to the very small number of ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children captured by the Australian Early Development Census (119 in 2009; 152 in 2015).

Not all ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children captured by the Australian Early Development Census have attended a Koori Preschool. Correlating Australian Early Development Census results with Koori Preschool participation is invalid use of the data.

- Q2. Between 2010 and 2016, 43 ACT public schools participated in 87 discrete action inquiry projects with 11 being conducted in 2016. These action research projects were conducted over a 10 month school year period with participants receiving academic input on how to develop an analytical approach to their teaching and improving student learning, data collection methods, data analysis and formulating informed recommendations to guide future directions at their classroom, team or school level.

The action inquiry program focus was to build teacher capability across the Directorate to meet the learning needs and aspirations of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Teachers collected data and revised teaching strategies and programs during their project.

Over the seven year period that action inquiry was delivered, many teachers moved schools and applied their new learning in different contexts thus increasing capacity to adopt an action inquiry methodology in a range of schools. Participants were instructed in how to triangulate data to increase reliability and from 2015 all participating schools reviewed their attendance strategies and data as a component of the projects they were implementing. A key element in action inquiry is teachers questioning what they are doing and ensuring they have valid data to continue what they are doing. This often resulted in projects taking new directions after professional reflection.

All student data presented in the reports is de-identified and was used in conjunction with total school student data derived from many sources, creating a more detailed specific data set to inform teachers and leadership teams in their strategic directions. Directors of School Improvement were among the Directorate leaders who received copies of the annual action inquiry reports so they could support schools in implementing report recommendations.

Only a few of the projects were ongoing from one year to the next. Where this was the case the new inquiry built on the learnings of previous projects.

For example in 2015, one primary school worked on improving receptive and expressive oral language skills in kindergarten and year 1.

The improvement in student learning outcomes as a result of this project led to the maintenance and extension of the program to other classes and year levels in 2016.

Action research forms an important part of building the capability and professionalism of teachers working in ACT public schools.

- Q3 The real retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from year 10 to year 11 in public schools is provided on page 30 in Figure B1.6 of the Annual Report.

Attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in public schools have been provided on page 17 of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education 2016-17 Report to the ACT Legislative Assembly*. The Report was tabled in the Assembly on 19 September 2017 and is available at the Education Directorate's website.

- Q4. While the mean score for year 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is numerically lower than the target, the difference is not statistically significant. The social and cultural disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is evidenced by lower educational performance on average than their non-Indigenous peers.
- a. Apart from an outlier in 2013, NAPLAN numeracy results for year 9 students in ACT public schools varied between 537 - 544 NAPLAN points between 2012 and 2016. The social and cultural disadvantage experienced by year 9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is evidenced by lower educational performance on average than their non-Indigenous peers.
- Q5. As this is a sample assessment, the National Assessment Program Science Literacy does not report data on the performance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the jurisdiction level.
- a. Approximately 30 ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students sat the assessment.
  - b. There was no ACT level data to report. As a sample assessment, performance data is reported at the national level only as an insufficient number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students sit the test to enable disaggregation at the jurisdiction level.
  - c. National results for the performance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can be found in the national reports at [http://www.nap.edu.au/results-and-reports/national-reports#NAP\\_sample\\_assessments](http://www.nap.edu.au/results-and-reports/national-reports#NAP_sample_assessments).

- Q6. The 2016-17 Annual Report did not include a graph for indigenous students studying or employed six months after leaving school because of the small number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who leave school each year.

In 2015, 89 percent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander year 12 graduates were participating in employment or study six months after leaving school and 74 percent were school leavers. These results were similar to the overall ACT results of 92 percent for year 12 graduates and 74 percent for school leavers.

- Q7 The Directorate offers flexible learning options (FLOs) which are curriculum enrichment programs that aim to strengthen students' learning and career planning. FLOs help students develop a connection between their future study, training and work goals.

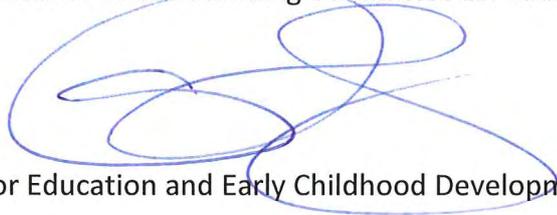
Delivered by industry experts in an authentic learning or work environment, FLOs provided an alternative learning experience for students whilst they attended high school and college. FLOs offered in 2016-17 included beauty therapy, community work, animal care and natural resource management. Nine Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students participated in FLOs in semester 2, 2016 and 21 in semester 1, 2017.

The majority of students in semester 1 2017 participated in the Kick Start my Career through Culture program, which was a partnership between the Education and Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorates. This program engaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in nationally accredited vocational training in culture and land management.

The ACT Government also partnered with Greening Australia and the Canberra Institute of Technology to deliver a program for students in years 7 to 9 to connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures through conservation and land management. The students learnt about native plants, bush foods, scar trees and land management practices. The program was conducted on country and at the Greening Australia nursery.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs

Signature:



Date: 02/01/18

By the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Ms Yvette Berry MLA