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**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

ELEVENTH ASSEMBLY

**Fossil fuel and gambling industries sponsorship in schools – Prevention and transition –
Assembly Resolution of 4 March 2025**

Government Response

**Presented by
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Education and Early Childhood
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Today I rise to talk about sponsorship policy changes being enacted to increase alignment with the values of the ACT public school system and expectations of our community.

Mister Speaker, the ACT Government is committed to ensuring education is free from corporate influence and our students continue to be given excellent opportunities in a safe learning environment. We demonstrate this commitment by investing in our public schools and having the right protections in place.

As you know, the ACT has the best funded public school system in Australia. The ACT continues to be the only jurisdiction to fund our public schools not just up to, but above, the national School Resourcing Standard. Corporate sponsorships can provide additional support to enrich experiences for our students and strengthen community connections. However, the ACT Government only supports sponsorship arrangements in schools that provide benefits to students and do not pose harm to them or their educational experience.

The Education Directorate has conducted a review of the corporate sponsorship in schools policy and engaged the Canberra community to develop an updated policy that meets the current needs and expectations of our community. Valuable feedback was received from parents/carers, current and former students, grandparents, community members, school staff and principals, school boards, Education Support Office staff, and key stakeholder and special interest groups.

Mister Speaker, you will recall that on 4 March of this year the Assembly passed a resolution calling on the Government to update the Education Directorate's policy on sponsorship to prevent fossil fuel or gambling companies from public school sponsorships by the start of the 2026 school year. The resolution also called on the Government to support transitioning away from sponsorship agreements that would no longer be supported under the new policy.

I informed the Assembly that engagement with the community would shape future policy design and that I would consider consultation outcomes prior to making decisions on this matter.

The Education Directorate has updated its policy to align with the changes called for by the Assembly and the public, during consultation. This demonstrates that those who supported the resolution being passed are representing community expectations of corporate sponsorship in schools.

The ACT is advancing its national lead in approaching climate change and mitigating its impact through the climate strategy. By preventing the fossil fuel industry from sponsoring our public schools and education system, we are making a stance on the importance of protecting our students from harm now and into the future.

The ACT recognises that children are the most vulnerable to climate change emergencies and are experiencing mental health impacts associated with climate change and environmental damage. It is important that we set our students up for success with respect to their well-being and right to a safe and healthy environment.

Mister Speaker, the ACT Government also recognises the harm posed by gambling and supports the prevention of gambling businesses, such as online betting and casinos, sponsoring our public schools. The ACT has taken measures to protect students against these harms such as by introducing the *Getting Played* high school education program to help young people understand the risks associated with gambling and gambling-like content in video games.

While supportive of prohibiting businesses that are singularly or primarily engaged in gambling, the Canberra community showed strong support for allowing sponsorship from local businesses that are linked to gambling such as community clubs. These businesses provide other appropriate services to our community and have a commitment under the ACT Government's Community Contribution Scheme. In

addressing this consultation outcome, businesses that have a link to a prohibited sponsor category are considered on a case-by-case basis and assessed on risks and benefits to students.

I am satisfied that the ACT Government has met both the agreed resolution and overall community expectations in ensuring a contemporary sponsorship policy for public schools that aligns with the ACT values, supports our schools and protects our students.