



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2013-2014

Jeremy Hanson CSC MLA (Chair), Chris Bourke MLA (Deputy Chair),  
Mick Gentleman MLA, Brendan Smyth MLA

## COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE GROUPS SURVEY

### SURVEY OF COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY GROUPS ON THE ACT BUDGET 2013-2014 TO BE PRESENTED BY THE ACT GOVERNMENT ON 4 JUNE 2013

If you wish to respond to this survey, please return it to [committees@parliament.act.gov.au](mailto:committees@parliament.act.gov.au) by **9.30am Tuesday 11 June 2013**. If there is insufficient room for any of your comments, below, please feel free to append additional comments.

**1. Full name of group/organisation:**

ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations

**2. Name of contact person for this survey and their telephone number and email address:**

Tim Lawley – Policy Officer

(02) 6241 5759

[contact@actparents.org.au](mailto:contact@actparents.org.au)

**3. Has your organisation/group developed a written analysis of the ACT Budget that it would like to submit to the Committee?**

Yes (If yes, please email it to the Committee Secretariat with your completed survey.)

**4. Please list, in order of priority, your three main areas of concern regarding the ACT Budget 2013-2014:**

a. ETD Budget cuts

b. Small increase in government school funding

c. Lack of funding for road safety around schools

**5. What are your views on the ACT Budget in relation to your priority areas?**

Council's priority area of interest in the budget is in relation to the education budget. Appended to this document is a detailed breakdown of Council's view to the education budget with regard to several areas.

**6. Are there any other particular issues with the ACT Budget that you would like to bring to the Committee's attention?**

No

**7. Did you provide a budget submission to the ACT Government?**

Yes

**8. Do you think that the ACT Budget has addressed the issues raised in your submission?**

No

**a. If yes, please comment**

The budget has addressed in part several of the issues raised in our budget submission, particularly with regard to providing support for canteens, students with a disability, EALD students and some capital works projects.

However the budget failed to adequately deal with the issue of road safety around schools, the promotion public education and parent involvement in public education and fully fund improvements in school infrastructure

**9. Does your organisation/group wish to give its views in a Committee public hearing on Friday 14 June 2013, at the Legislative Assembly, London Circuit, Canberra.**

No

If you indicate yes, and the Committee decides to invite you to appear at the hearing, the Committee Office will contact you by close of business Wednesday 12 June 2013 to confirm arrangements. Please note that the Committee may not be able to hear from all groups/organisations.

Thank you very much for contributing to the inquiry.

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# ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations

*The parent voice on public education*

11 June 2013

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## **Council's views on the ACT Budget**

The ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations is the peak body of ACT public school Parents and Citizens Associations. We promote the interests of parents and other school community members to government. Our area of priority is ensuring a strong public education system exists in the ACT.

Council views this year's budget in a generally positive light, however we have serious concerns around some areas and omissions in the budget. Council is particularly concerned with the cuts required of ETD, the relatively low growth in the education budget and the lack of investment in road safety.

### **Cuts to the ETD Budget**

Council understands that this budget requires ETD to make \$6.2 million in savings. Council has long advocated against such cuts. Education, as a frontline service, should be exempt from such cuts, and funding should grow at a minimum to keep pace with inflation and allow for natural increases in the number of school students.

Whilst the cuts are meant to come from within the directorate and not the classroom Council is concerned that such cuts may have a flow on effect to the classroom in the delivery of support provided to teaching staff. If any cuts are to be made it should be ensured that they will not have a flow on effect to the classroom.

### **Rate of budgetary increase**

Despite the cuts Council understands that the total spending on public schooling is still to grow by \$22.3 million an approximate increase of 4%. Council always welcomes growth in the education budget. However school census results released earlier this year showed that for the fifth year in a row enrolment in government schools has increased. Furthermore once CPI and staff wage increases are factored in the effect of the increase will be diminished. Council is particularly disappointed by this small growth in public education spending when compared to the private sector which has seen an 8.1% increase in funding from the ACT and Federal Governments. Public schooling is under-resourced compared to private schooling and we want this imbalance to be redressed, not worsened.

### **Lack of investment in road safety and school transport options**

Council was disappointed 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

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for Parent & Citizen Associations in the ACT.  
Council represent over 60,000 parents in 85 ACT public schools.

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pickup/drop off facilities and drivers failing to stop at flagged crossings. In fact road safety around schools was the number one area of concern for our surveyed members. 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. Council recommended that transport should be viewed as a single issue requiring a whole of government response.

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

### **Provision of education in the Molonglo Valley**

Council was pleased to see money had been set aside to finalise the plans for a new Coombs Primary School to service the residents of the new homes in Molonglo. However Council is disappointed that the design is to be completed in 2013-2014 with construction and opening of the school to come much later.

The Molonglo Valley has many new occupied houses. Council is distressed at the apparent lack of provision of public schooling in this large new area given many of the other primary schools in the region are already at, or over capacity. We fear that parents will be forced to avail themselves of private schools and the children denied an inclusive secular education.

### **Investment in Canteens and Students**

On a positive note Council was pleased to see the government is taking the issues facing canteens seriously and is appreciative of the \$200,000 grant earmarked to allow Council to help struggling canteens. This funding will help improve the management of canteens and introduce an online ordering system, turning school canteens into more efficient operations.

Likewise Council is pleased to see money has been earmarked to provide additional support to students with a disability in both the classroom and in getting to and from school. As was noted in the 2013 school census report, enrolment of students with a disability increased by 7.7% in the government sector. The provision of these funds will go a long way towards helping these students achieve their potential.

Council was pleased to see the budget has allocated an additional \$1.8m over 2 years a new centre in Wanniasa to help students from migrant and refugee backgrounds with limited or no English skills.

### **Parental engagement in Schools**

Council still believes that funding for parental engagement in public schools is vital to develop effective school communities which will benefit both students and schools. \$50,000

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a year for 4 years would be sufficient for Council to conduct effective programs.

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