



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

QTON No. 02

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

JEREMY HANSON CSC MLA (CHAIR), MARISA PATERSON MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), JO CLAY MLA

Inquiry into referred 2019–20 Annual and Financial Reports and Budget Estimates 2020-21
ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE
19 February 2021

Asked by Ms Clay on 19 February 2021: Electoral Commissioner, Damian Cantwell took on notice the following question(s):

[Ref: Hansard Transcript 19 February 2021 [PAGE 52]

In relation to:

Are you tracking what percentage of 16 and 17 year olds you're reaching with your educational outreach program?

When you do provide those figures, if you have a breakdown of your outreach and multicultural and linguistically diverse communities that would be helpful.

Mr Cantwell's answer: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

Elections ACT does not track the percentage of 16 and 17 year olds that take part in the educational outreach program. However, Elections ACT does maintain records of the number of participants involved in the educational activities provided. The table below shows the number of individuals that participated in educational sessions run by Elections ACT since 2015/2016:

Year	Number of participants by organisation type					
	Colleges	High schools	Primary schools	CALD ¹ groups	Community groups	ACTPS groups
2019/20	70	162	585	0	13	162
2018/19	298	140	791	20	77	35
2017/18	24	129	885	45	71	0
2016/17	67	282	528	45	101	20
2015/16	30	67	240	25	30	0

Note 1: Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD).



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The Elections ACT education team conducts electoral education activities for ACT school and community groups. Many of these activities are conducted in conjunction with the Legislative Assembly Education Office either at the Assembly or as an outreach visit.

Activities may include:

- Presentations to school (Years 4 to 12) and community groups on elections and voting, particularly the Hare-Clark electoral process, with a hands-on mock election or referendum experience;
- Assistance with the conduct of school elections such as Student Leadership Group (SLG) elections ranging from the loan of electoral equipment (voting screens, ballot boxes) to the development of election rules and provision of advice and training; and
- Presentations to community groups on agreed subjects of relevance to the electoral system.

Elections ACT, in conjunction with the Legislative Assembly Education Office, also delivers four Teacher Quality Institute-certified professional development courses each year for primary and secondary school teachers to enhance their Civics and Citizenship (C&C) teaching to school aged children.

All presentations are tailored to meet the varying needs of the participants including people who have disability, experience homelessness, are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, are culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), or young people. Participants routinely report high levels of satisfaction with the content and delivery of these sessions.

In the lead up to a typical ACT Legislative Assembly election, education sessions are delivered to the CALD community in-language by bilingual educators and translated election information is distributed, covering 12 language communities identified on the basis of need within the ACT. Bilingual educators reached approximately 1,200 electors for the 2016 ACT election. Unfortunately, in 2020 due to the risks from COVID-19, the use of bilingual educators had to be suspended. However, the distribution of translated information including posters and pamphlets throughout the various CALD communities and advertisements in foreign language newspapers ensured information about the 2020 election was provided to the CALD community.

Education sessions for school and community groups were also suspended from mid-March 2020 due to the risks from COVID-19, involving cancellation of a large number of presentations, the Year 11 Constitutional Convention, as well as scheduled teacher professional development. The electoral education program has now resumed for 2021 and bookings from schools have commenced.

Under the ACT/Commonwealth joint roll arrangement the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) maintains a joint electoral roll for Commonwealth and ACT purposes. In maintaining the roll, young Australians are one of the key target audiences for the AEC. While it is incumbent upon electoral authorities to maintain an accurate electoral roll throughout an election cycle, it is well documented that many people defer bringing their enrolment up to date until an election is imminent. In



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recognition of this tendency, electoral authorities place special emphasis on encouraging eligible citizens to enrol in the lead-up to specific electoral roll milestones such as a close of roll for a general election. The AEC and the ACT Electoral Commission conduct targeted advertising campaigns at election time to inform electors of their obligation to enrol and vote, including young Australians. Information is placed in channels used by young Australians such as social media (Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram) and through public relations activities in a range of locations.

In 2019, the AEC reported that Australia experienced the highest ever youth enrolment.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

Signature:

Date: 25 February 2021

By the Electoral Commissioner, Damian Cantwell AM CSC