



# Inquiry into annual and financial reports 2024–2025

## Answer to question on notice

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Asked by: Ms Laura Nuttall MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Education and Early Childhood

Reference: Education

Hearing: 17/11/2025

In relation to: Education and Meals in Schools

Question received: 21/11/2025

Answer Due: 05/12/2025

- (1) What assessment has been done of the rollout of the Meals in Schools program?
- (2) What has been changed about the program for the 2026 school year?
- (3) If the government plans to roll out Meals in Schools to more schools, which schools are they and how will those schools be decided?

Ms Yvette Berry MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

- (1) In late 2024, the implementation of the Meals in Schools pilot was evaluated through a desktop review undertaken by ACT Government's Strategy and Transformation Office (STO). This review confirmed the program facilitates the delivery of meals to students who would likely benefit from such an initiative. Additionally, in 2024-2025 Nutrition Australia ACT conducted four quarterly surveys that informed the most appropriate meal offerings and assess the impact of the program on school communities. Through the pilot phase, the Education Directorate learnt that moving to a model that provided a mixture of shelf-stable items, along with fresh fruit and vegetables, would better support the long-term sustainability and expansion of the Meals in Schools program.
- (2) The Education Directorate is moving to a new approach to the Meals in Schools program for 2026. The program will provide simpler 'grab and go' food options sourced through the existing Whole of Government Food Supply Panel. This approach allows the Education Directorate to deliver the program in a more financially sustainable and scalable way as the program works towards expanding to 20 schools in coming years.
- (3) Expanding the Meals in Schools Program to additional schools is contingent upon future Budget decisions. Schools will be prioritised according to data that highlights communities most likely to benefit, including ICSEA scores, Student Family Index, and Positive Behaviour for Learning indicators.

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Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Social Policy

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'Y' followed by a horizontal line and a loop.

Date:

10/12/25

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