Legislative Assembly for the ACT

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Report on Annual & Financial Reports 2004-2005

MARCH 2006

Report 2

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Resolution of Appointment

To examine matters related to early childhood education and care, primary, secondary, post secondary and tertiary education and vocational training, non-government education, youth and family services, technology, arts and culture, sport and recreation.

Terms of Reference

On 18 October 2005 the following reports for the financial year 2004 – 2005 and the calendar year 2004 were referred by the Legislative Assembly to the Standing Committee on Education, Training and Young People:

- Canberra Institute of Technology
- Department of Education and Training
- Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Board
- Office for Children, Youth and Family Support
- Cultural Facilities Corporation

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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

2.11 The committee recommends that large departments, like the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services, administering multiple agencies and having complex reporting requirements provide clear cross-referencing tools to ensure that large reports can be easily navigated and measures related to specific outputs are clearly linked.

RECOMMENDATION 2

2.14 The committee recommends that standardised performance indicators be developed with reference to national reporting standards where possible.

RECOMMENDATION 3

3.5 The committee recommends that the department clearly indicate within annual reports the expenditure related to central administration and expenditure related to achieving educational outcomes in school settings.

RECOMMENDATION 4

3.7 The committee recommends that comprehensive data relating to the contribution of volunteers to the effective operations of schools be included in annual reports provided by the department and that such information be indexed.

RECOMMENDATION 5

4.6 The committee recommends that all occupational health and safety measures established and achieved together with numbers and types of adverse incidents experienced by both staff and students be reported annually.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 On 18 October 2005 departmental and agency annual reports for 2004-2005 were presented to the Legislative Assembly and referred to standing committee for inquiry and report.

1.2 The following reports were referred to the Standing Committee on Education, Training & Young People:

- Building & Construction Industry Training;
- Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT)[1];
- Cultural Facilities Corporation;
- Department of Education & Training;

  Office of Children, Youth & Family Support.

1.3 The committee resolved that it would defer consideration of the annual report of the Cultural Facilities Corporation to a later date.

1.4 The committee held public hearings on 1 & 2 November 2005 at which Ms Katy Gallagher MLA, the Minister for Education and Training, and Minister for Children, Youth & Family Support and officials from the relevant agencies appeared to answer questions.

Purpose and Intent of Annual Reports

1.5 Annual and financial reports are the primary accountability documents of departments and agencies through which the Legislative Assembly and the general public can satisfy themselves that public moneys are being properly spent and that the outcomes for which funding has been appropriated are being achieved. Annual reports should be concise, accessible and clear.

1.6 Agency reporting requirements are set out in the Chief Minister's Annual Reports Directions (*the Directions*) which are issued under the *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004*

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[1] The CIT reports by calendar year thus the report before the Committee was for 2004.

1.7 Annual reports are the principal way in which agencies account for their performance to Ministers, to the Legislative Assembly and to the wider community. They are tabled in the Assembly and form a key part of the historical record of government and the decisions, actions and outcomes of public administration. As such annual reports are an important source of information for the public, the media and other interested groups. Annual reports are also a valuable tool for internal management of agencies.

1.8 The content of annual reports reflects the requirements of *the Directions* and are also influenced by comments on their adequacy from Legislative Assembly committees, the Institute of Public Administration's annual review of reports, the Auditor General's report, the *Effectiveness of Annual Reporting* (*Report 1 of 2003*)[2] as well as practices and publications from other jurisdictions.

1.9 Annual reports are assessed each year by the Institute of Public Administration [ACT Division] against formal criteria as follows:

> The assessment method for IPAA (ACT)'s awards consists of two main elements:
> (a) Compliance with formal guidelines and requirements; and
> (b) Internationally acknowledged attributes of good quality reporting.
>
> Reports must demonstrate compliance with government and parliamentary guidelines or mandatory requirements as a minimum standard to be considered for an award.[3]

1.10 Given the comprehensive nature of the IPAA's assessment the committee considers that its limited resources are better utilised by focussing on program effectiveness and the ability for the Assembly and its committees to be informed about the level of effectiveness on appropriate reporting about government programs. The committee has therefore decided to focus on issues of program management and reporting of that program management, rather than assessing the annual reports referred to it for compliance against formal guidelines.

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[2] Accessible at http://www.audit.act.gov.au/auditreports/reports2003/Rpt1_2003.pdf

[3] Institute of Public Administration Australia [ACT Division], *Judges Report 2003-2004*, p 5

1.11 The inquiry process, and public hearings in particular, also provide assembly members with an opportunity to seek clarification about issues raised in annual reports. The transcript of proceedings provides a record of the hearings, which can be accessed on the Assembly internet site www.parliament.act.gov.au/committees.

2 OFFICE OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY SUPPORT

2.1 Annual reporting for the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support (OCYFS) is a component (Output class 1) within the Annual Report for the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (DHCS).

2.2 The activities and function of OCYFS became a part of the DHCS in November 2004. Children, Youth and Family Services is one of three Class 1 Outputs achieved by DHCS.[4] There are five components to this output recorded in the Annual Report.

2.3 At the public hearing held on 1 November 2005, the committee discussed the following matters in relation to Office of Child Care (Output 1.1):

- the Integration of the OCYFS into DHCS;
- staff recruitment and management of individual case loads;
- reporting levels and numbers of children in care;
- establishment of the Institute of Child Protection Studies in partnership with Australian Catholic University;
- child-focused practices; and
- licensing of child care services.

2.4 The committee discussed the following matters in relation to Support for Young People (Output 1.2):

- review of the Adolescent Day Unit;
- mechanism for consultation with young people about services; and
- Youth Connection Program.

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[4] Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (ACT), *Annual Report 2004-2005*, pp. 79-101.

2.5 The committee discussed the following matters in relation to Youth Justice (Output 1.3):

- upgrades and service improvements at Quamby Youth Detention Centre;
- audit of Quamby Youth Detention Centre by the Human Rights Commissioner;
- the achievements of the Turnaround Program;
- expansion of Restorative Justice Unit's role to include young people; and
- the on-going review of the Children and Young People Act (1999).

2.6 The committee discussed the following matters in relation to Care and Protection Services (Output 1.4):

- definitions and reporting in relation to the *Children and Young People Act 1999*;
- establishment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Unit;
- operation of the indigenous foster care program; and
- individual support packages for young people and residential care options.

2.7 The committee congratulates the department for initiating a review of family support services through the individual and family support data mapping project and the committee considers that this review will provide a valuable understanding of the use-patterns for community-based family support services. The committee looks forward to seeing the results of this project in the next annual report.

2.8 In general, while recognising the scope of the department's activities, the committee noted the confusing structure of the DHCS Annual Report and emphasised the need for cross-referencing within the report to allow claims to be evidenced and quantified.

2.9 For instance, the committee noted that many programs were reported as achieving successful outcomes for the community but information or data to support those statements was not easily found within the multiple volumes of a large report. While the data is included within the report, clear cross-referencing would assist the general reader to locate and review this information.

2.10 The committee considers this an important consideration for large departments administering diverse and complex programs that will be keenly monitored by interested stakeholders. Methods of cross-referencing to allow easy access to the detail of program outputs should be a priority for annual reporting.

RECOMMENDATION 1

2.11 **The committee recommends that large departments, like the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services, administering multiple agencies and having complex reporting requirements provide clear cross-referencing tools to ensure that large reports can be easily navigated and measures related to specific outputs are clearly linked.**

2.12 The guidelines used to determine measures of performance for programs were also unclear. While the committee understands that some programs may not be readily quantifiable and qualitative indicators can provide a legitimate account of program outcomes, the committee would encourage the department to consider whether some standardised indicators can be used for reporting.

2.13 The committee would encourage the department to review and consider benchmarking reporting indicators against national standards where possible.

RECOMMENDATION 2

2.14 **The committee recommends that standardised performance indicators be developed with reference to national reporting standards where possible.**

3 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

3.1 The Department of Education and Training provides school education and training services to the ACT community.[5] In October 2004, the structure of the department changed with the movement of the Office for Children, Youth and Family Services to the Department of Disability, Housing and Family Services.

3.2 At the public hearing held on 2 November 2005, the committee discussed the following matters:

- commencement of the Education Act;
- articulating the relationship between central office and school-based activities in an annual report;
- recognising and measuring educational achievements;
- national skills standardisation measures;
- extending information technology infrastructure within schools;
- managing the restructure of the department;
- role of volunteers in school environments;
- curriculum renewal and learning outcomes;
- community engagement and consultation processes;
- technology in the classroom;
- capacity for professional development for teachers;
- trends in enrolment levels in government schools including preschools;
- maintaining and ensuring quality in building infrastructure;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander indicators;

[5] Department of Education and Training *Annual Report 2004-05*, p. 1.

- school improvement process;
- school-based new apprenticeships; and
- early intervention strategies and assessment processes for children with special learning needs including autism.

3.3 The committee noted the need to coordinate teacher training programs within the requirements of the curriculum in the ACT.

3.4 Different reporting requirements for the department were noted with a mis-match between financial period reporting and academic year reporting. However, the committee suggests clearer indicators within annual reports about expenditures relating to the central administration of the education system and those directed towards achieving educational outcomes in school settings.

RECOMMENDATION 3

3.5 **The committee recommends that the department clearly indicate within annual reports the expenditure related to central administration and expenditure related to achieving educational outcomes in school settings.**

3.6 The committee welcomed the commitment of the department to include more details in future reports of the contribution to school communities made by volunteers and encouraged the department to ensure that such key outcomes, which will be of interest to the general community, can be clearly located via the index of annual reports.

RECOMMENDATION 4

3.7 **The committee recommends that comprehensive data relating to the contribution of volunteers to the effective operations of schools be included in annual reports provided by the department and that such information be indexed.**

4 CANBERRA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

4.1 The Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) provides vocational education and training services to students in a variety of settings including:

- traditional classrooms;
- on-line and distance course;
- workplace training;
- simulated work environments; and
- flexible learning centres.[6]

4.2 The committee noted that the report provided reflected the activities of the Canberra Institute of Technology across the calendar year reflecting the Institute's main concern with the academic year rather than the usual financial year timeframe for annual reports.

4.3 At the public hearing held on 2 November 2005, the committee discussed the following matters:

- vocational education and training;
- meeting the needs of ACT Industries for apprenticeships and traineeships;
- responding to skill shortages in industries through incentives to studenst;
- canberra Institute of Technology key performance areas;
- on-line delivery of course components;
- cultivation of partnerships with industry groups and business;
- equipment audit and safety standards; and
- occupational health and safety targets for employees and students.

4.4 The committee was particularly concerned to ensure that occupational health and safety targets for CIT students become a reporting priority for the Institute. Safety awareness was considered by the committee to be an essential indicator of work-readiness for apprentices and trainees and strategies

[6] Canberra Institute of Technology, *Annual Report 2004*, p. 8.

undertaken by the Institute to ensure this outcome should be noted in the report.

4.5 While the committee congratulates the CIT for establishing and reporting on the safety targets set for employees, comparable strategies established for the student users of CIT services are an equally important indicator of performance in yearly reports.

RECOMMENDATION 5

4.6 **The committee recommends that all occupational health and safety measures established and achieved together with numbers and types of adverse incidents experienced by both staff and students be reported annually.**

Mary Porter AM MLA

Chair

21 March 2006

APPENDIX A: Hearings and Witnesses

The committee held public hearings on 1 and 2 November 2005 into the Department of Education and Training Annual Report 2004-2005 and the 2004 Canberra Institute of Technology Annual Report.

The committee heard from the following people at the public hearing:

Ms Katy Gallagher, Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Children, Youth and Family Support, Minister for Women and Minister for Industrial Relations

Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services

Ms Sandra Lambert, Chief Executive
Dr Colin Adrian, Deputy Chief Executive
Ms Lou Denley, Executive Director, Operational Services Group
Ms Bronwen Overton-Clarke, Executive Director, Policy and Organisational Services
Mr Ian Hubbard, Director, Finance and Budget
Ms Pauline Brown, Senior Manager, Child and Family Centres
Ms Meredith Whitten, Director, Vardon Report Implementation Team (now Advocacy, Review and Quality)
Mr Frank Duggan, Director, Care and Protection Group
Mr Neil Harwood, Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit
Mr Paul Wyles, Director, Client and Adolescent Services
Mr David Collett, Director, Strategic Asset Management
Ms Jenny Kitchin, Director, Partnerships Group
Ms Alli Stevenson, Care and Protection Worker, Office for Children, Youth and Family Support
Mr Gerard Nolan, Acting Team Leader, Care Orders, Care and Protection Services

Department of Education and Training

Dr Michele Bruniges, Chief Executive
Ms Julie McKinnon, Deputy Chief Executive
Mr Craig Curry, Executive Director, Education
Ms Anne Thomas, Executive Director, Resource Management
Ms Anne Houghton, Director, Training and Adult Education
Ms Carol Harris, Director, Schools Southside
Ms Joanne Howard, Director, Schools Central

Mr Wayne Chandler, Director, Schools, Northern Canberra
Ms Kathy Melsom, Director, Student Services and Equity
Ms Helen Strauch, Director, Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Mr Rob Donelly, Director, Budget and Facilities
Mr Mick Kegel, Director, Information Management
Mr Michael Bateman, Director, Human Resources
Ms Beverley Forner, Director, Planning and Reporting

Canberra Institute of Technology

Dr Peter Veenker, Director
Mr Peter Kowald, Acting General Manager
Mr Vaughan Croucher, Dean, Learning Services Division

A transcript of public hearings is available from the Legislative Assembly website at http://www.hansard.act.gov.au/hansard/2005/comms/default.htm.

APPENDIX B: Questions on Notice

Answers to questions on notice are available from the Committee Secretary at committees@parliament.act.gov.au.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING & YOUNG PEOPLE
ANNUAL & FINANCIAL REPORTS HEARINGS
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

QON No	From	To	Subject	QON Received	Answer Due	Answer Back?
ETYP 01	Foskey	Children, Youth & Family Support	Quamby	1/11	9/11	30/11
ETYP 02	Foskey	Children, Youth & Family Support	Club 12-25	1/11	9/11	20/12
ETYP 03	Foskey	Children, Youth & Family Support	The Youth Council	1/11	9/11	30/11
ETYP 04	Foskey	Children, Youth & Family Support	Capital Works	1/11	9/11	30/11
ETYP 05	Foskey	Children, Youth & Family Support	Youth Services Program Planning Group	1/11	9/11	30/11
ETYP 06	Foskey	Children, Youth & Family Support	Young People Plan	1/11	9/11	30/11

QON No	From	To	Subject	QON Received	Answer Due	Answer Back?
ETYP 07	Foskey	Children, Youth & Family Support	Children & Young People's Commissioner Office	1/11	9/11	30/11
ETYP 08	Foskey	Children, Youth & Family Support	Transition Options	1/11	9/11	30/11
ETYP 09	Foskey	Children, Youth & Family Support	Australian Government's Family Violence Partnership program	1/11	9/11	30/11
ETYP 10	Foskey	Education	Community Engagement Unit's advice on P-10 school proposal for W. Belconnen	2/11	9/11	9/11
ETYP 11	Foskey	Education	School Improvement	2/11	9/11	9/11
ETYP 12	Foskey	Education	Valuing Cultural Diversity	2/11	9/11	9/11
ETYP 13	Dunne	Education	Overseeing primary school teachers' training	4/11	14/11	15/11
ETYP 14	Dunne	Education	Income & Expenditure Building & Construction Industry Training Fund Board (ACT B&C ITFB)	4/11	14/11	15/11
ETYP 15	Dunne	Education	Major issues, challenges & achievements – ACT B&C ITFB	4/11	14/11	15/11
ETYP 16	Dunne	Education	Outlook for the coming year - ACT B&C ITFB	4/11	14/11	15/11

QON No	From	To	Subject	QON Received	Answer Due	Answer Back?
ETYP 17	Dunne	Education	Key strategic achievement - ACT B&C ITFB	4/11	14/11	15/11
ETYP 18	Dunne	Education	Overview of agency performance & financial results - ACT B&C ITFB	4/11	14/11	15/11
ETYP 19	Dunne	Education	ACT Women's Plan and its relevance - ACT B&C ITFB	4/11	14/11	15/11
ETYP 20	Dunne	Education	Community engagement - ACT B&C ITFB	4/11	14/11	15/11
ETYP 21	Dunne	Education	*Human Rights Act 2004* - ACT B&C ITFB	4/11	14/11	15/11
ETYP 22	Dunne	Education	Fraud prevention - ACT B&C ITFB	4/11	14/11	15/11
ETYP 23	Dunne	Education	Notes to and forming part of the financial statements - ACT B&C ITFB	4/11	14/11	15/11
ETYP 24	Foskey	Education & Training	Recommendations in the IGSEC budget submission	Taken on Notice (TON)		9/11
ETYP 25	Dunne	Education & Training	Number of young women with babies who are students in the ACT high school & college system	TON		9/11
ETYP 26	Dunne	Education & Training	Number of reported accidents involving CIT students in 2004	TON		9/11

QON No	From	To	Subject	QON Received	Answer Due	Answer Back?
ETYP 27	Dunne	Education & Training	Missing detail in graph on p.60 of CIT annual report	TON		9/11
ETYP 28	Dunne	Education & Training	Comparative table of salary ranges and averages for staff of the Dept	TON		9/11
ETYP 29	Dunne	Education & Training	Restrictions on out of school professional development for teachers	TON		9/11
ETYP 30	Gentleman	Education & Training	Details of student performance at Amaroo School	TON		9/11
ETYP 31	Dunne	Education & Training	Executive Leadership Development Program	TON		11/11
ETYP 32	Dunne	Children, Youth & Family Support	Outline of post-graduate program conducted by the Australian Catholic University	TON		28/11
ETYP 33	Dunne	Children, Youth & Family Support	Copy of review report relating to Adolescent Day program	TON		28/11
ETYP 34	Dunne	Children, Youth & Family Support	Administration of client survey for Youth Connections	TON		28/11