



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY
SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2012-2013

Amanda Bresnan MLA (Chair), John Hargreaves (Deputy Chair),
Alistair Coe MLA, Meredith Hunter MLA, Brendan Smyth MLA

**SURVEY OF COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY GROUPS ON THE ACT BUDGET 2012-2013,
TO BE PRESENTED BY THE ACT GOVERNMENT ON 5 JUNE 2012**

If you wish to respond to this survey, please return it completed to
committees@parliament.act.gov.au, by 9.30AM Tuesday 12 June 2011.

If there is insufficient room for any of your comments, below, please feel free to
append your comments in an extra page. In any appended pages, please give your
comments after you state what question/s you are addressing.

1. Full name of group/organisation:

ACT Council of Parent & Citizen Associations (Council)

**2. Name and honorific (Ms, Mr, Dr, etc.) of your organisation's/group's contact person
for this survey and their telephone number and email address:**

ACT Council of Parent & Citizen Associations
(02) 6241 5759
contact@actparents.org.au

**3. Has your organisation/group developed a written analysis of the 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 2012-2013:**

- a. Despite an overall increase for education in the budget, ETD is still required to make \$6.2 million in cuts. These cuts should not come from existing programs run in ETD to support students' learning. Operational cuts at ETD such as travel allowances and ICT policy should not be made where they could have a negative impact on students' learning experiences.
- b. Whilst ETD have orally advised this will not be the case. Although the cuts represent under 1% of the budget, the quantum is significant and we seek transparency and disclosure so we can reassure parents accordingly.
- c. The budget failed to fund a range of initiatives suggested by Council in our budget submission. In Council's submission we highlighted a range of areas that parents felt needed appropriate funding or support. Whilst the budget funded a few of these suggestions, many were neglected. Council was disappointed to see so few of its suggestions adopted (for further details see question 8)

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

Council's priority area is public education. Council is pleased to see the capital works funding going to public school infrastructure, including the expansion of Duffy Primary School. Council is also pleased to see funding going to help students with a disability access post school options and funding dedicated to assisting schools become carbon neutral. Additionally, Council was pleased to see an increase in funding dedicated to transport for students with a disability.

Despite this Council remains concerned about the \$6.2 million in budget cuts ETD will have to make and strongly urge the government not cut public education programs or make cuts that could have an impact on students' learning experiences.

Council feels the budget missed important opportunities in supporting education. The budget failed to provide additional support to schools with low literacy and numeracy levels. Council's experience is that a little money in this area can go a long way in helping struggling students.

6. **Are there any other particular issues with the Budget that you would like to bring to the Committee's attention?** If so, please append a brief outline of the issue/s, in order of priority.

Yes

If yes, please comment:

In our submission Council raised the issue of P&Cs managing unprofitable canteens. Whilst this resulted in ETD forming a High Level Taskforce Working Group to look into the issues facing canteens no money was set aside in the budget to fund outcomes. Council remains hopeful that the working group can come up with solutions to problems facing school canteens in the ACT and would like to see a speedy implementation. Therefore Council was disappointed to see no money had been put aside in the budget to fund any outcomes that may arise from the working group.

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

Yes

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

No

Comment (if you wish):

In our submission Council stressed the need for an increased budget for ETD. Whilst the overall budget for ETD appears to have increased, Council feels that due to increased student enrolments, ETDs operational budget should not be cut.

Council stressed the importance of running an advertising campaign promoting public education and the value of parental involvement. Public schools in the ACT have achieved, and continue to achieve a range of excellent outcomes for their students, offering low cost, quality education in the ACT. Therefore, Council feels it is appropriate for the government to run a campaign promoting these positive aspects of public education. Likewise, numerous highly respected studies have shown that parent participation in schools improve outcomes for students. Because of this Council feels it is appropriate that a campaign should be run by ETD to recognise and promote parent participation in the schools to further increase participation and positive outcomes for schools and students in the ACT.

Council's submission called on the government to provide adequate IT support to each school. Digitising the classrooms in our schools pose many benefits for students, but if the implementation and ongoing maintenance of IT is handled poorly it can end up having a detrimental effect on a student's learning. Therefore, it is crucial that the government provide adequate funding for IT support in our schools.

Council feels the budget missed an opportunity to provide additional funding to high needs students. ETD indicated that literacy and numeracy in ACT school children was amongst its the directorate's top priorities. Under the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership agreement, ETD was able to employ 21 literacy and numeracy officers. However, these officers were focused only in primary and high schools. Council feels there is a strong case to increase the number of these officers and extended them to colleges, however without additional funds such actions cannot be achieved. The funding provided for the literacy and numeracy officers is not ongoing. Because of this and the important role specialists have played in our schools, Council feels it is important that the government looks to continue the funding beyond the various cut off dates.

Previously the ACT budget increased the amount of funding for students for whom English was an additional language or dialect (EALD). However, since this increase in funding the amount of time a student spends in an Intensive English Centre has decreased and several professional development programs have ended along with the loss of an executive officer position at ETD that provided much needed support to teachers. Additionally Council would like to see the government raise the level at which an EALD student receives additional funding so all EALD students with a Language Proficiency Rating below 4 are funded. Council sees it as important to properly fund the development of EALD students with programs and increase support.



ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations

The parent voice on public education

29 June 2012

To whom it may concern

I am writing to you on behalf of the ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations (Council) to express our disappointment over the consultation for the public hearings at the budget estimates committee.

Council has previously attended the Community and Industry Groups Hearings and has found the opportunity to present our concerns in person extremely positive. However, this year due to an administrative error at the Legislative Assembly Council was not invited to attend the public hearings.

Whilst Council is grateful for the extension granted us in submitting written comments on the budget, Council is disappointed at the lost opportunity to present our views to the committee in person which Council feels is beneficial to all parties.

Council is always happy to provide comment and advice on issues effecting public education from a parent's perspective and can be contacted at contact@actparents.org.au to do so.

Sincerely



Vivienne Pearce

President

ACT Council of Parents & Citizen Associations