



# Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2024–25

## Answer to question taken on notice

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Asked by: Mr Taimus Werner-Gibbings MLA

Addressed to: Mr Tom Duncan

In relation to: School visits

Hearing: 14 November 2025

Uncorrected Proof Transcript pp 10-11

Transcript provided: 18 November 2025

Answer Due: 25 November 2025

Mr Duncan took on notice the following question:

**MR WERNER-GIBBINGS:** Yes, thank you. Over the past four months, I have noticed that the involvement of—well, the amount of schools that are coming through and being—engaging in the democratic process, and so we have conversations with them. Why interest?

Because I have been asked by my daughter whose school has not yet gone. So, how do groups and schools get involved with the assembly's public understanding work? Is the assembly pro-active in contacting schools and offering opportunities, or is it only when schools contact the assembly and they say, "We would like to come along"? How does that work?

**Mr Braddock:** Excellent question, and one I have asked before because I am very keen to see as much education of the Canberra community as to what this parliament does and how it effectively is representing them. In terms of the actual logistics of how they get involved, Mr Duncan, are you able to answer that?

**Mr Duncan:** I am afraid I have got one, but I can take it on notice. I think my understanding is that we are quite pro-active and we do go out quite regularly to schools and invite them to come here. But I just—I do want to be certain that that is correct. But certainly, yes, I will provide the answer to that question on notice.

**MR WERNER-GIBBINGS:** Okay. Well, a little bit, certainly. And if invitation to given, and how are the—which schools are invited and why? You know, is it we do it electorate by electorate, or grade by grade? That sort of thing. I am just—what is the system?

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**Mr Duncan:** As I said, I will take it on notice. But my sense is that every school is invited regardless of electorate. It is not done by electorate, it is just done by every school, and we accept anyone that wants to come but we do. I do stress that we do have limited resources. We have like two and a half staff, so we have got a capacity issue, but I do not think there is too many schools that have been refused. But again, I will take that question on notice and provide the committee with how the system operates.

**Mr Braddock:** Mr Duncan, would it be possible as part of that on notice to provide what that capacity is in terms of the number of school visits or students?

**Mr Duncan:** Sure. Yes. Yes, I can certainly do that.

Mr Tom Duncan: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

There has been a steady increase in school visitation since 2022, when the Assembly began offering school programs following COVID. Prior to COVID, we had a small percentage of public schools participating in programs, but currently they make up a large portion of our visits across all programs. We note that following a school's first engagement with us, they are very likely to rebook for the following year, and that the first two terms are usually booked out as teachers tend to teach civics and citizenship in the first semester.

The Education and Engagement team maintains an excel spreadsheet of all ACT schools (public, independent and catholic), which is categorised by year group and contains contact details (phone and email) of administrative staff as well as curriculum specific teachers. This is regularly updated as teachers leave/join. The team then uses this database to call and email every school at the start of each year with a list of programs available.

Schools are also contacted regularly throughout the year to promote specific programs with set dates such as the ACT Constitutional Challenge and the Committee Challenge. The Education and Engagement team have contacted and continue to promote programs through the ACT Education Directorate, Independent Schools, and Catholic Education Office (CEO). To date, the Education Directorate is the only one of the three which has a dedicated newsletter that we can promote through, though recently we have found a contact at the CEO who is willing to promote our programs. We have contacted other networks including principals, Education Services Australia, and various other education providers and associations, but with limited success.

Our year 7 to 12 programs are also promoted through the History Teachers Association in the ACT, and we recently joined the Canberra Teachers Facebook Group, which resulted in a significant increase in registrations to our teacher professional learning program. We look forward to trialling this in 2026 to promote school programs.

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We have had cancellations this year which have been primarily due to staffing issues within the school i.e. teachers leaving, or new teachers starting and not having done the administrative work required for visits. We offer outreach as well as digital programs as an alternative, but these have not been taken up in these cases.

Whilst we do have some capacity to provide programs for more schools, exactly how much is difficult to measure. This is due to other competing programs including public sector seminars, teacher professional learning, citizenship evenings, community programs, and other bespoke programs that arise. Programs also need to be organised around sitting weeks and other events in the building which also limits our capacity.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on the Integrity Commission and Statutory Office Holders

Signature:



Date:

25/11/25

By the Acting Speaker of the Legislative Assembly for the ACT, Andrew Braddock MLA