

Inquiry into 2002-2003 Budget

Report Number 1.

Standing Committee on Education

April 2002

Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory



Committee membership

Ms Karin MacDonald MLA (Chair)

Mr Steve Pratt MLA (Deputy Chair)

Ms Roslyn Dundas MLA

Secretary: Mr David Skinner

Administration: Ms Judy Moutia

Resolution of appointment

To examine matters related to early childhood education and care, primary, secondary, post secondary and tertiary education, non-government education, arts and culture, sport and recreation.

Minutes of Proceedings, ACT Legislative Assembly, No. 2 - 11 December 2001, p 12.

Terms of reference

That the committee inquire into and report on the priority areas for service delivery in the 2002-2003 ACT budget relating to:

- early childhood education and care;
- primary, secondary, post secondary and tertiary education;
- non-government education;
- arts and culture; and
- sport and recreation,
- with particular reference (but not limited) to:
 - the adequacy of resources provided to meet current needs;
 - gaps in services; and
 - any duplication of services and areas identified for re-prioritisation.

(self referred on 12 February 2002)

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Summary of recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1

The committee recommends that the Government seriously examine this report, in conjunction with the submissions presented, in considering its expenditure priorities for the upcoming budget.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The committee recommends that the Government investigate the perception that education funding has declined in real terms and address this in the 2002-2003 Budget.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Background

1.1. On 12 February 2002, the committee resolved to conduct an inquiry into the 2002-2003 budget following an invitation from the Treasurer. The committee decided upon the following terms of reference for its inquiry:

That the committee inquire into and report on the priority areas for service delivery in the 2002-2003 ACT budget relating to:

- early childhood education and care;
- primary, secondary, post secondary and tertiary education;
- non-government education;
- arts and culture; and
- sport and recreation,
- with particular reference (but not limited) to:
 - the adequacy of resources provided to meet current needs;
 - gaps in services; and
 - any duplication of services and areas identified for re-prioritisation

1.2. The committee advertised in the local press calling for submissions and received 24 submissions from interested organisations and individuals. A list of submissions is included at the end of this report (Appendix 1).

1.3. On 26 February 2002 the committee received a briefing on budget issues from the ACT Treasurer but no further information was provided to the committee prior to 28 March 2002. The committee has therefore not been able to address the budget issues raised the Government's 2002-2003 Budget Consultation document.

1.4. The committee also conducted two public hearings, one on 8 March 2002 and the second on 22 March 2002. In these hearings the committee received evidence from 11 organisations and these are listed at the end of the report (Appendix 2).

1.5. The committee thought it important to ensure that the community understood the committee's role properly – that it was not in a position to allocate funds, merely consult with the wider community. To this end, the committee stressed the point in its advertisements in the local press as well as to witnesses before they appeared in the public hearings.

1.6. It is important to underline that point again in this report – the committee was not tasked with making budgetary decisions, rather it played a consultative role, examining and filtering the evidence it received. In addition to the filtered material presented in this report, the committee has also passed all relevant submissions to the Government for its consideration. The committee expects that these documents will form an important non-departmental source of information regarding budgetary priorities and funding allocations.

1.7. The committee notes that it heard from a wide range of witnesses throughout this process, many of whom had not previously had the opportunity to participate in this type of consultation. The committee would like to thank all the organisations and individuals who made submissions to the committee. The committee understands the great pressures that many community groups, service providers and representative associations are placed under and the significant time commitment that is required to make a submission to a committee inquiry.

Scope of the report

1.8. The committee undertook to present the common themes which emerged in the course of the inquiry as well as presenting to the Assembly a succinct snapshot of the community's views in relation to expenditure in the education portfolio.

1.9. During the inquiry, the committee heard an array of often quite disparate views about how funding decisions within the education portfolio should be guided and, indeed, where money should be spent in the sector.

1.10. The committee decided quite deliberately that it did not want to articulate preferred funding allocations at the micro or program level, nor did it wish to adjudicate on particular policy positions at variance with one another. The committee believes that such an approach is fraught with danger as it opens up a form of 'competition based' consultation that community groups have been critical of in past budget processes of this nature.

1.11. The committee has divided the report into two main sections – chapters 2 and 3.

1.12. In Chapter 2, the committee outlines some of the main themes to arise out of the evidence given via written submission, the briefing with the Treasurer and the two public hearings, including: funding issues; teachers' conditions; early intervention; students' with disabilities and vocational education.

1.13. Chapter 3 provides a concise summary of the relevant written and oral submissions presented to the committee. In this chapter the committee has kept its comments to a minimum to emphasise community views.

Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that the Government seriously examine this report, in conjunction with the submissions presented, in considering its expenditure priorities for the upcoming budget.

Recommendation 2

The committee recommends that the Government investigate the perception that education funding has declined in real terms and address this in the 2002-2003 Budget.

Chapter 2. Key Themes

2.1. In this chapter the committee has very briefly examined the key themes to emerge during the course of the inquiry.

Early intervention and children at risk

2.2. The committee was advised that a great deal of work needs to be done towards improving support services for students at risk of not achieving satisfactory education outcomes and students with behavioural difficulties.

2.3. The committee all agreed that early intervention should be a guiding principle in the education sector. The committee believes that early intervention makes both social and economic sense. Money spent on addressing problem behaviours and learning difficulties early on, provides improved outcomes for these students and can result in significant cost savings down the track.

2.4. However, the committee gained the impression that significant additional resources need to be applied across the education sector to provide more support for early intervention programs.

2.5. There were calls for more behavioural management specialists and school counsellors across the board.

2.6. The AEU called for increased funding for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service to develop a mental health outreach service to schools. The AEU also saw a need to provide additional funding for, ‘professional development to assist teachers in the development of Individual Education Plans for students with behaviour problems and in the principles of case management for students at risk’¹.

2.7. The ACT P&C Council advocated additional funding to, ‘provide professional development for secondary school counsellors and teachers in recognising early signs of mental illness among adolescents, supporting students with mental health problems and providing advice on available services’.²

¹ Submission 3, p 2.

² Submission 4, p 1

2.8. These proposals appear eminently reasonable to the committee.

Students' with disabilities

2.9. The committee heard that there is a large degree of unmet need for students' with disabilities across the entire education sector. The committee was advised that support services for students with disabilities need to be improved and widened. Many submitters made this point.

2.10. Specific proposals are outlined in the following chapter but can be summarised by the following from Advocacy ACTion Inc:

For most students with disabilities the resources appear to barely cover their care needs. The resources are certainly not adequate to support meaningful pursuit of education outcomes.³

Vocational Education

2.11. The committee gained the impression that more resources are required in the area of vocational education. The committee believes that vocational education has been overlooked over the years and is an especially important option for students at risk of not achieving satisfactory education outcomes. The committee is proposing an inquiry into vocational education and will go into this issue in some depth at that time.

IT resources

2.12. Information and communications technology (ICT) featured as a prominent issue during the inquiry. The ascendancy of ICT in the workplace and society generally requires curricula capable of providing strong, practical skills in the using of these technologies.

2.13. However, relevant curricula in schools are only part of the equation. Adequate resourcing is imperative if students are to get the most out of ICT training. It seems reasonable to conclude that schools require computer systems, software, networks and general infrastructure that is comparable to that seen in the workplace. If students are learning their skills on outmoded technology, their ability to apply their knowledge in a workplace setting would be severely limited. It is also the case that the job of teachers is not made any easier by having to use outdated

³ Submission 17, p 1.

equipment with limited technical backup or support. In this regard the Secondary Principals Association makes an excellent point:

Moving on to resources: with regard to IT support, if you asked education practitioners in town, “After relief teachers, what is the next most important issue that you address on a daily basis?”, they would say, “Technical support for ICT in schools.”

Teachers have colleagues who work in the public service and in private business. They are frequently alarmed or frustrated to hear of the level of support for ICT in business and industry standards, as opposed to what teachers face in schools on a daily basis.⁴

2.14. The ACT P&C Council advocated the appointment of IT technical staff for each ‘school clusters’ as well as increasing the opportunities for teachers to access professional development in the use of ICT in educational settings.⁵

2.15. There were calls for monies allocated to ICT resources to be spent on a broader range of schools. The Association of Parents and Friends of ACT Schools (APFACTS) noted that:

APFACTS is at a loss to understand the ACT Government’s reasoning for the exclusion of IT funding for the over 20% of students who attend non-systemic non-government schools until there is a review of funding. This is particularly of concern in the light of the Government’s apparent drive to provide some \$27 million in additional funding largely to Government schools before the review of funding even commences’⁶.

2.16. The Catholic Education Commission also had some concerns about the funding allocations for ICT in its schools. The Commission noted that:

The ACT Labor Government has committed \$1m to Catholic System schools for ICT developments. However, since 1998, the ACT Government has spent at least \$7.8 million in Government schools on computers, related hardware and software and associated training and programs for its staff and students. Not one dollar was allocated by the Government to support ICT developments in Catholic schools over this time.

⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 12 March 2002, p 12.

⁵ Submission 4, p 2.

⁶ Submission 21, p 2.

In the ACT Government 2001.2002 budget, the trend continued with the allocation of a further \$2.5 million to Government schools for ICT, including a \$300,000 deal with TransACT to provide all government schools with high speed connections to the Internet. This is in line with the Government's push to create the 'Smart Capital' by funding ICT development but neglects the 28% of ACT school children and families in Catholic schools.⁷

Teachers' conditions

2.17. The committee heard that the teaching workforce is ageing and that shortages of specialist teachers is becoming a problem. The Secondary Principals' Council noted in evidence that:

... it is a national concern. The reality in the ACT is that over the next five to 10 years, 70 per cent of the current teaching staff will be eligible to retire. That is a huge manpower issue for all jurisdictions to address. Teacher shortages are currently being experienced in specialist areas like information and communication technology, science, maths, technology, languages and vocational education. The important point is that planning needs to be put in place now to address the issue. There are immediate issues to be addressed, and longer-term ones as the teaching service reaches retirement age.⁸

2.18. The Secondary Principals' Council argued that an inquiry is urgently needed to examine how the issues of an ageing workforce can best be managed. The committee agrees this is a national problem which needs to be addressed at the local level as a matter of urgency.

2.19. The committee was informed through several channels that the high number of casual teachers at CIT was problematic. The committee was told by CIT management, the AEU and the CIT Students' Association that converting many of these casual teaching staff to longer-term contracts was a budget priority. This was said to cost approximately \$900,000 to achieve. However, there was concern that this funding should not come at expense of funds already allocated to service delivery.

2.20. In the public hearing, the Australian Education Union noted that:

... CIT now operates at about \$10 million per annum less than it did some six years ago.

⁷ Submission 9, p 5.

⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 12 March 2002, p 12.

The capacity of the organisation to provide for the decasualisation of a large component of the work force is very limited.⁹

2.21. Similarly the CIT Students' Association noted that:

... the CIT is looking to convert around 80 casual teachers to a full-time load of some description, and that is going to be a cost to the institute of an additional \$900,000. That is of concern, because that money will come out of other service delivery areas—resources, equipment for students, updating technology and so forth—and that is a real difficulty. That is the highest priority for CIT this year. We are concerned that those resources will impact on the way the services are delivered to students as well. There appears to be no choice in this matter, either, as it appears that this is the only place from which that money can come.¹⁰

2.22. And finally, the committee wishes to highlight the important role that teachers and the teaching profession play in the enhancement and development of our community. The committee believes that more has to be done to improve the status of teachers in the community mind. In this context, an assessment of appropriate remuneration levels, strengthening of teacher training, career development pathways and flexible working conditions needs to be considered.

⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 12 March 2002, p 4.

¹⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 12 March 2002, p 22.

Chapter 3. Summaries

3.1. In this section, the committee has summarised the relevant evidence it received. The committee has tried to condense this material as much as possible. As such this section is not exhaustive and the committee urges the Government to review the actual submissions presented when considering budget priorities and funding allocations. The committee notes that some submissions and correspondence received by the committee fell outside the terms of reference established at the outset and the committee has not addressed these submissions in this report.

Australian Institute of Fitness

3.2. In its submission, the Australian Institute of Fitness stated its main areas of concern in relation to the training sector as being:

1. Introduction of relevant apprenticeships for the sport and recreation industry – we are well on the way to working with employers to create an AIF Apprenticeship Scheme to

- 1.1 upskill existing workers, especially in the burgeoning area of personal training and micro businesses;

- 1.2 bring more young people into the fitness industry through an integrated apprenticeship model;

2. Support for development of private registered training organisations in the areas of sport and recreation, with reference to –

- 2.1 workplace assessors trained in contextualised fitness industry assessment systems and tools’,

- 2.2 on the job trainers trained in integration of skills tasks with knowledge based off the job training, and

- 2.3 curriculum and delivery tools for new national qualifications in fitness AND management.

3. Establishment of a Fitness Industry Skills Training Centre in an existing commercial facility;

4. Integration of school based training with industry based training;

5. Development of programs to suit identifiable areas of employment, such as traineeships for sports teams, or frontline management for all sport and recreation facility managers.¹¹

Blue Gum School

3.3. The submission from Blue Gum School stated a case for a review of the proposal to apply the Socio-Economic Status (SES) funding formula to all independent schools, not just existing ones. In its submission, the School drew the committee's attention to an article it wrote for *The Canberra Times*, arguing that there are significant problems with the SES funding model.

3.4. The School noted that:

While... [the SES] funding problem stems from the Federal Government, it is compounded by the ACT Government's policy decision to adopt the same SES model when allocating ACT funds to new independent schools. Unless our school can access the same level of Federal and ACT funding as comparable neighbouring schools, we cannot survive as a low-fee open-access school beyond the end of this year. This is a serious equity issue...¹²

3.5. Blue Gum School put the case that funding decisions should not be swayed or coloured according to the type of the particular school seeking funds - instead *need* should be the benchmark for establishing priorities. The school argued that, 'If our community is serious about tackling social justice issues, the ACT Assembly needs to fund the services that are the most responsive to the needs of disadvantaged families. Their 'label' (ie government pre-school, private/community child care centre etc) should be irrelevant in determining funding. Services achieving positive outcomes for the most disadvantaged children should attract the highest government funding support and encouragement'¹³. The committee notes that the SES funding model is a creation of the Federal Government.

3.6. Blue Gum school also argued that there is a duplication of bureaucracy in relation to early childhood services in the ACT. The School considered that a rationalisation of these bureaucratic structures

¹¹ Submission 1, p 1-2.

¹² Submission 2, p 1.

¹³ Submission 2, p 3.

would free-up funds for service delivery as well as providing more consistent standards across the sector.

Australian Education Union (ACT Branch)

3.7. In its submission, the Australian Education Union outlined 7 proposals for consideration in the budget. They are summarised below.

Programs for children at risk

3.8. The union argued that, ‘Additional resources need... to be allocated to the new Student Services Section of DECS to improve support programs for “students at risk” of not completing satisfactory outcomes from education and for students with behaviour problems’¹⁴.

3.9. The union saw that the deployment of additional resources to behaviour management programs was also important in addressing the issues confronting at-risk students.

3.10. Increased funding for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and the Schools as Communities Project was also seen as an important step in this area.

Curriculum and Assessment Review and Renewal

3.11. The union called for funding to be applied to support a review of the current curriculum in ACT Schools. The union submitted that:

Using the New Generation of High Schools “Essential Learnings” as the guiding principles, ACT DECS needs to develop a Framework for schools to assist in the process of curriculum development...

Resources need to be allocated to Central Office to develop such a Framework and to assist with its implementation. Four Curriculum and Assessment Field Consultants would be required to work with teachers and schools in developing effective and innovative curriculum and assessment practices.¹⁵

Support for students with disabilities

¹⁴ Submission 3, p 2.

¹⁵ Submission 3, p 2-3

3.12. The union argued that much more needs to be done in terms of providing support for students with disabilities. The union stated that, ‘The AEU – ACT Branch has provided DECS and Legislative Assembly Standing Committees with its own research into services for students with disabilities in schools. This research has highlighted areas of need and gaps in service provision both within education programs and in complementary support services. There is an ongoing need to address the resourcing issues that have been highlighted by the AEU’.¹⁶

3.13. The union advocated a series of measures including: better resourcing to provide educational and general support to students with disabilities; funding to ancillary services such as the Child Health and Development Services, Disability Services and ACT Health; and the provision of programs for students with challenging behaviour outside current formal school structures.

Transition programs

3.14. In relation to transition programs, the union argued that:

1. The Government needs to provide resources to assist high schools and colleges to provide support to students with pathways and transition planning.
2. Funding for professional development needs to be provided for teachers to enhance their skills and knowledge about student pathways planning, careers and life long learning.¹⁷

Class sizes – primary school staffing formula

3.15. The union expressed the view that more funding needs to be applied in primary schools in an effort to bring down class sizes. The union also argued that, ‘the Government needs to allocate resources to review and plan for the future to implement staffing parity between primary schools and other sectors’.¹⁸

Pre-schools support

¹⁶ Submission 3, p 3.

¹⁷ Submission 3, p 4.

¹⁸ Submission 3, p 5.

3.16. The union argued that more emphasis need to be placed on the maintenance of pre-school buildings and infrastructure as the poor state of some buildings places an added pressure on pre-school teachers.

CIT – casualisation

3.17. The union advocated the expenditure of \$1m per annum to convert casual staff at CIT to long term contract and permanent positions.

ACT P&C Council

3.18. The ACT P&C Council submitted a list of specific expenditure proposals totalling \$20.05m in funding. Rather than list the specific proposals and the estimated annual costs, the committee briefly summarises below the areas touched upon by the ACT P&C Council.

3.19. The Council nominated the following areas which it considered required funding allocations:

- Learning assistance in literacy and numeracy;
- Reduction of class sizes in schools serving severely disadvantaged communities;
- Student welfare;
- High school development and staffing;
- Parent participation in schooling; and
- Information technology.

3.20. As noted earlier, the Government will have an opportunity to review all the submissions made to the committee and it can examine particular proposals and their estimated costs at that time.

Noah's Ark Resource Centre Inc.

3.21. The Noah's Ark submission sought additional recurrent funding to maintain its services in the areas of early childhood education.

3.22. Noah's Ark noted that there were several areas of need within its client base that could not be met within its current budget. The organisation noted that:

We provide almost 400 families in the ACT with resources and 32 services with educational resources and special needs equipment, yet our current funds do not allow for the replacement of any resources and we have many clients on the waiting list as the mobile [resource unit] can not afford to operate in the ACT for more than 3-4 days per term. The vehicle we have been using for 10 years also urgently need replacing at a cost that can only be covered if the ACT Government makes a contribution.¹⁹

3.23. The Centre pointed out that its School for Conductive Education was currently unaffordable to many low-income families due to the high-cost of public liability insurance.

3.24. The Centre argued that it was so critical to receive an increased funding allocation that, ‘If the level of funding for our programs, which are programs that contribute considerably to the delivery of early childhood education in the ACT are not met in the 2002-2003 budget the Mobile Resource Service, the Toy Library, Conductive Education and Facilitated playgroups for children with special needs will cease to operate in the ACT.’²⁰

Canberra Youth Music

3.25. Canberra Youth Music identified problems with the manner in which music is taught in ACT schools. The organisation noted that, ‘the major problems fall into two areas: dispute over teaching method in primary schools, and lack of curriculum focus and resources at the secondary level’.²¹

3.26. Canberra Youth Music submitted that the ACT Government should facilitate some type of forum to review the manner in which music is taught in ACT schools. Canberra Youth Music noted that:

What is urgently needed is a Territory-wide forum, bringing together all the key people and institutions such as the ACT Department of Education and Community Services, Canberra School of Music, schools and schools[‘] music teachers, youth and community music

¹⁹ Submission 5, p 2.

²⁰ Submission 5, p 2.

²¹ Submission 6, p 1

organisations such as Canberra Youth Music, private music teachers, and associations such as the Australian String Teachers Association'.²²

Youth Coalition of the ACT

3.27. The Youth Coalition made a detailed submission to all Assembly Standing Committees and to Government.

3.28. Below are the major recommendations forwarded by the Youth Coalition in relation to this committee's portfolio interest.

Recommendation 12 - That the Government promote best practice alternative education models.

Recommendation 13 - That the ACT Government commit resources to the collection of qualitative and quantitative data that will inform future planning of college education programs.

Recommendation 14 - That an overarching strategy supporting best practice models of working with young people to meet their education and support needs be developed and implemented in alternative and mainstream schools with resourcing from the ACT Department of Education and Community Services.

Recommendation 15 - That the Department of Education and Community Services develop a "user friendly" directory to inform young people, their carers and external youth and community organisations of the different education programs, their locations and the relevant eligibility criteria and referral process for each program.

Recommendation 16 - That the ACT Government allocate resources (training and funding) and support to successful programs within mainstream schools which aim to address the needs of "at-risk" young people.

Recommendation 17 - That the recruitment process for teachers employed at programs such as the Adolescent Day Unit and Quamby be reviewed.

Recommendation 18 - That consideration be given to the establishment of a Northside alternative education service to complement the existing Galilee Day Program based in Kambah.

Recommendation 19 - That funding levels between government and community managed alternative education programs be reviewed and any disparities addressed.

²² Submission 6, p 2.

Recommendation 20 - That the Youth Services Program allocation be increased by 30% to in part fund extra service delivery hours to meet increased demands from schools.

Recommendation 21 - That the ACT Government, in consultation with the youth sector identify, promote and resource best practice models for the engagement of youth workers within schools. The provision of relevant training and supervision of youth workers must also be resourced.

Recommendation 22 - That further funding is allocated to providing appropriate literacy and numeracy assistance to children and young people from Kindergarten to Year 12 in all school systems. That Adult English Language Literacy and Numeracy funded programs be made available to young people accessing ACT colleges.

Recommendation 23 - That Living/Social Skill programs, be developed as core components of the school curriculum for secondary school and college students.

Recommendation 24 - That the ACT Government, in consultation with the local Indigenous community and relevant advisory structures to identify, promote and resource best practice models for the engagement of Indigenous young people in education programs.

ArtsVoice ACT Inc.

3.29. ArtsVoice made the following recommendations in its submission to the committee:

Recommendation 1: ArtsVoice ACT urges the ACT Government to actively encourage new businesses that receive incentives in the form of reductions in “set up costs” to become “good corporate citizens” by sponsoring arts organisations and arts activities in the Territory.

Recommendation 2: ArtsVoice ACT requests that the base level of funding under the Arts Development Program be increased to \$4 million; and that a focus be placed in funding under the Arts Development program that enables a robust local arts economy with a priority placed on employment of ACT regional artists and companies which support regional arts development.

Recommendation 3: ArtsVoice ACT requests that \$350,000 (an increase of \$200,000) be made available for Arts – participating in the Cutting Edge (introduced in last years budget: \$150,000) for 2002/3 and subsequent years 2003/4 and 2004/5

Recommendation 4: ArtsVoice ACT requests that a specific funding based be allocated for cultural facilities based upon a cultural planning approach (whereby the value of arts facilities in community

interactions and development is recognised in the same way as education, health and sporting facilities are recognised).

Recommendation 5: ArtsVoice ACT notes that an appropriate funding base will need to be identified and recommends the Assembly investigate allocating a percentage of gaming income towards this purpose in lieu of the inability of arts facilities to be able to integrate such income streams within their own complexes.

Recommendation 6: ArtsVoice ACT welcomes the focus in ArtsCapital on cultural tourism and suggests that to support this emphasis:

- a proportion of tourism promotional funding be directed to promoting ACT arts facilities and activities as opposed to favouring the national attractions;
- arts should be made the cornerstone of community celebrations e.g. ensure festival funding (such as Floriade) and major event funding... has [a] defined arts component.

Recommendation 7: ArtsVoice ACT welcomes the whole of government approach to the arts in ArtsCapital whereby art will have a profile in all portfolios, and suggests that, to ensure this is adopted, all new government policy proposals should include consideration of the proposal's impact on, or potential for, the arts.²³

Catholic Education Commission – Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn

3.30. The Catholic Education Commission put the case that it did not receive fair funding in relation to public schools. The Commission argued that Catholic Schools are 'not well-off' as they receive less than 65% of the funding (per student) that is applied to students in Government schools.²⁴

3.31. Regarding the notion of fair funding, the Commission sought the following:

Students with disabilities

The Catholic Education Commission seeks the provision of additional funding from the ACT Government for students with disabilities to a

²³ Submission 8, p 3.

²⁴ Submission 9, p 1.

level equal to the additional funding available to students with disabilities who attend Government schools.

Early childhood initiatives

The Catholic Education Commission seeks:

- To achieve matched funding equal to 25% of the funds provided to Government schools for this [early childhood] initiative.
- To have funding for such initiatives included in the base formula for recurrent grant assessments.

ACT per capita grants

The Catholic Education Commission seeks:

- To secure a legislated formula for funding of student recurrent costs for Catholic schools in the ACT.
- To progressively achieve a recurrent student grant formula for Catholic schools at the equivalent of 25% of ACT Government student recurrent costs.

Information and communication technologies

The Catholic Education Commission seeks:

- An immediate further injection of funding for information technology for students attending Catholic Schools equal to that provided for students attending Government schools.

3.32. In summary, the Catholic Education Commission argued that:

The parents and guardians of the 16,800 students attending Catholic schools in the ACT pay their fair share of taxes and charges. They are not seeking an equal share in the distribution of Education funding but a fair share for their children.

The Catholic Education Commission believes that the establishment of equitable government funding arrangements for Catholic schools in the ACT should **not** be achieved by a reduction in funding for Government schools by an overall increase in Education funding and should recognise that Catholic and Government schools are partners in achieving the public good and our local and national interests.²⁵

²⁵ Submission 9, p 5.

Ms Audrey Guy

3.33. Ms Guy, a private citizen, made a number of remarks about the state of the education sector as she saw it, they are summarised below.

3.34. Ms Guy noted that:

When it was first suggested that schools have a degree of autonomy in their financial management, it was agreed that appropriate training would be provided. This has not occurred except at the bursar level...

Departmental policy does not always conform to Government policy. The Government is anxious to have year 12 retention as high as possible yet several staffing cuts at College level have affected the Colleges' ability to meet this requirement.²⁶

Coalition of ACT Schools (CAS)

3.35. The Coalition of ACT Schools presented the committee with a submission in relation to its inauguration. The new lobby group claims that:

As its top priority, CAS is targeting equity in government funding for all non-government schools. At the moment, funding is allocated according to various criteria – a school's religion; whether a school is established or new; whether a school is systemic or independent etc. The issue of 'equity' seems to have been lost along the way...²⁷

3.36. CAS made the claim that the Government is planning to allocate \$3 million dollars for IT in government and Catholic schools only. They argued that this was demonstrably unfair calling for the Government to, 'suspend this IT allocation until the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Education has had an opportunity to consider submissions from the community'²⁸.

ACT Down Syndrome Association

3.37. In its submission to the inquiry, the ACT Down Syndrome Association identified several areas of unmet need in relation to support services within the ACT school system.

²⁶ Submission 10, p 1.

²⁷ Submission 15, p 1.

²⁸ Submission 15, p 2.

3.38. The three main points raised in the Association's submission were:

1. Additional resources are required for the professional development of school Principals and teachers of students with Down Syndrome in mainstream settings.
2. There are still insufficient resources to meet the therapy need of students with special needs within school settings
3. Additional resources need to be directed to the Behavioural Management Unit within the Department.²⁹

Advocacy ACTion Inc.

3.39. Advocacy ACTion argued made the following point in relation to early childhood education and care:

Whilst there are services in the ACT that promote and support the inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood education and care, it is clear that the resources are inadequate. To a large extent inclusion is dependent on the goodwill of childcare staff. There is no facility for additional resources to support children with disabilities. In most cases the support requirement is not great. However, the absence of additional resources to provide that support is a major barrier to the inclusion of young children who have disabilities.³⁰

3.40. Speaking on the disability issues associated with primary, secondary, post secondary and tertiary education, the organisation argued that:

Inclusion of students with disability is a major issue. For most students with disabilities the resources appear to barely cover their care needs. The resources are certainly not adequate to support meaningful pursuit of education outcomes. As a consequences very few students with disabilities have the opportunity to acquire the basic learning that is required to operate successfully in the community. The lack of an adequate education creates a major life disadvantage for many students who have a disability.³¹

3.41. Advocacy ACTion also noted that more resources need to be directed towards therapy services for children with a disability as well as

²⁹ Submission 16, pp 1-3.

³⁰ Submission 17, p 1.

³¹ Submission 17, p 1.

allocating funds to provide specialist behaviour management services for students in need.

Canberra School of Music

3.42. In the public hearing, the Canberra School of Music outlined a range of musical education programs that it runs in schools. The school indicated that there are projecting a funding shortfall in this financial year of \$106,000.³² The school stated that without funding to meet this shortfall, it would only be able to provide the programs to students that are already enrolled. That is, no new students could be catered for.

3.43. In its submission to the inquiry, the school noted that:

In discussions with the Education Department at the beginning of 2000 it was identified that the three programs run for DECS by the School of Music under the current agreement were being under-funded by around \$70,000. For the financial year 2000/2001 an extra \$26,000 was added to the ITA Service Level agreement to partially compensate. However due to salary cost increases and CPI adjustments the Ainslie Primary School, Extended Primary Program, Music for Students with Talent were under funded by \$88,338 in 2001 and \$106,000 in 2002. We require an increase in government funds in order to avoid severely compromising these programs.³³

CIT Students' Association

3.44. The CIT Students' Association stated that there are several areas where funding could be applied to improve the life of students. In the public hearing the association pointed to the following issues for government's consideration:

- The introduction of a new student identification card system with smart-card functionality;
- There is a significant hardship faced by students regarding the high-cost of parking at the Reid campus. It was said that the average cost of parking for full-time students was \$1260 per year. The association sought a system of parking vouchers for students, whether they be full-time, part-time, low income, part-time workers;

³² Transcript of Evidence, 12 March 2002, p 29.

³³ Submission 18, p 1.

- There are no appropriate accommodation services available to CIT students which in times of high-rents can put a great deal of hardship on students;
- The association expressed concern over the high level of casual teachers at CIT; and
- It was claimed that CIT has \$18 million less in its budget than it did 5 years ago, although the students numbers have stayed the same.

Construction Industry Training Council (CITC)

3.45. In its submission, CITC presented two sets of proposals aimed at addressing two particular issues: 1. gaps in services; and 2. fragmentation of vocational education training.

3.46. In relation to service gaps, the council noted that due to recent government changes relating to the provision of advice and support services, potential employers of apprentices are having difficulty finding information relevant to consideration of employment such as: pay rates; leave and holidays; superannuation; long service leave.

3.47. The council proposed that:

1. Government review existing funding and resources to ensure that these essential industry needs are met.
2. Government allocate funding to the Industry Training Advisory Body (ITAB) to carry out these functions
3. Government ensures that industry, through the Industry Training Advisory Body is fully consulted on initiatives/programs targeted at potential employers.³⁴

3.48. In relation to fragmentation of vocational education training, CITC noted that:

The building and construction industry see a clear need to centralise a number of functions currently performed by a variety of departments and agencies. The current adhoc approach is seen as a waste of scarce resources and the cause of a number of problems facing this industry.

³⁴ Submission 19, p 4

This fragmented approach significantly impacts on the issues outlined in [relation to gaps in service].³⁵

3.49. The council proposed the following measures in this regard:

1. A central body and/or agency to distribute and monitor all tertiary funding for VET including the VET funding to schools and colleges. This process is also to include Federal funding where it applies to VET in the ACT.
2. This same body and/or agency to establish a small tripartite council (non paid) to advise on all issues that impact on VET.
3. A data base to be established to include contact details for all areas of VET. This database to be readily accessible to potential users and available in a format that can be accessed by individuals that do not use or have access to a computer.³⁶

Attention Deficit Disorder Support Group Inc.

3.50. In its submission to the committee, the support group outlined several recommendations of the National Health and Medical Research Council report on Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The support group called for action by the government in these areas.

3.51. They are reproduced below.

Recommendation 6

A specific and individualised management plan should be formulated for each child with ADHD and their family.

Recommendation 7

Associated problems such as learning difficulties, peer relationships, low self-esteem, family dysfunction and co-morbid conditions should be specifically addressed in the individualised management plan.

Recommendation 8

Treatment should be multi-modal and involve consideration of simultaneous medication use, behaviour management, family counselling and support, educational management, and specific developmental issues.

³⁵ Submission 19, p 5

³⁶ Submission 19, p 5.

Recommendation 25

Doctors, educators, other relevant professionals and parents should collaborate to ensure the optimum management of ADHD.

Recommendation 26

Further research is required regarding the impact of ADHD in the education, health, welfare and justice systems.³⁷

3.52. While not all of these recommendations fall within the context of considering the ACT budget, they highlight the approach that is being sought nationally and the consequent funding commitment that this entails.

3.53. The support group advocated the reopening of the “School without Walls” as it was seen as the best type of school for children with ADHD. The group also expressed the view that more male teachers should be employed noting that, ‘ADHD boys do need a role model and somebody they can relate to. They may not have a father in their household’.³⁸

3.54. The group saw the need for occupational therapists, physiotherapists and speech pathologists in the school system to assist students with learning disorders and attention disorders.

ACT Secondary Principals’ Council

3.55. In evidence before the committee the Council raised several priority areas for funding including improved: IT support; students at risk; and increasing the number of available relief teachers.

3.56. The Council also advocated an inquiry into the ageing teacher workforce and the shortage of younger teachers coming up through the system.

The Association of Parents and Friends of ACT Schools (APFACTS)

3.57. In relation to children with disabilities in mainstream educational settings, APFACTS argued that:

³⁷ Submission 20, p 3.

³⁸ Submission 20, p 3.

APFACTS considers that the funding for students with disabilities in mainstream schooling should not depend on whether they attend a government or non-government school. We note that this view has wide support in the community.

APFACTS requests the Education Committee to recommend that the Government provide funding in the 2002-2003 Budget that will substantially narrow the gap between the funding for students in the government and non-government school sectors.³⁹

3.58. In relation to class size APFACTS noted that:

APFACTS requests the Education Committee to recommend that in the 2002-2003 Budget the ACT Government rectify the great imbalance in funding between the government and non-government school sectors by ensuring that the recurrent funding for the non-government sector be at least 16.5% of that provided to the government sector. Consideration should also be given to the interest subsidy pressures resulting from the precedent set in the government sector.⁴⁰

3.59. In relation to the allocation of IT funding APFACTS stated that:

APFACTS requests the Education Committee to recommend that the ACT Government provide IT funding for students attending non-systemic non-government schools in the 2002-2003 Budget on a equivalent per student basis.⁴¹

3.60. In relation to Interest Subsidy Support APFACTS noted that:

APFACTS requests the Education Committee to recommend that the ACT Government urgently review the interest subsidy needs of the non-government school sector and make a meaningful increase in funding in the 2002-2003 Budget.⁴²

Association of Independent Schools

3.61. The association argued that funds are being inequitably distributed between public and private sectors. The association noted that:

³⁹ Submission 21, p 1.

⁴⁰ Submission 21, p 2.

⁴¹ Submission 21, p 2.

⁴² Submission 21, p 2.

...there is quite an equitable distribution of families with certain incomes attending both sectors, but funding is disproportionately distributed between the sectors. In percentage terms, the recurrent grants from the ACT government are the lowest across Australia—and we are concerned with that—and yet the educational costs in the ACT are second to the Northern Territory.⁴³

3.62. The association also argued that funding for students with disabilities was inadequate and inequitable vis-à-vis public schools. The association stressed that it was not advocating a reduction in funding for public schools, rather an increase in funding for non-government and independent schools.

Arts and Recreation Training ACT

3.63. In its submission, Arts and Recreation Training ACT made the following observations about its needs.

- Funding models based on the ANTA Purchasing Guides ie based on recommended durations per qualification rather than outcomes based formulae – this ensures delivery parity with other states for traineeships and apprenticeships
- Seamless articulated pathway from schools to VET providers and tertiary sector
- Innovative VET delivery and flexible timetabling in colleges to facilitate industry requirements of the training package through use of Practice Firms, Work Placements in Primary and High Schools including employment of School Based New Apprentices
- Different traineeship models - The cultural arts sector is eager to employ trainees based on mentoring, however many of the smaller cultural organizations are based on arts funding grants that do not cover the employment of additional staff. Need to fund pilots to test alternative arrangements through learning networks for small businesses and mentorships
- Need to target industries (eg libraries and museum, sport sectors) where there has been no previous VET training, with funding to recognise the skills of the existing workers. The existing workers need to be encouraged to join the agenda and to engage in lifelong learning and the pursuit of qualifications

⁴³ Transcript of Evidence, 12 March 2002, p 39.

- Urgent need for an increase in industry recognised technical professional development opportunities for teachers involved in delivering VET courses. Industry has indicated that teachers, including all employed by private providers, CIT or schools, who are involved in delivering industry VET courses need to have recent industry relevant experience and/or qualifications at least at AQF 4 (maybe in very few instances - AQF 3), and as a minimum all teachers should be qualified and experienced at least to one level above that which they are teaching. This PD needs to be supported and adequately funded.
- Support regional development by encouraging cross border initiatives and partnerships eg the ACT has elite training facilities and elite sporting organizations, so career-oriented trainees in a number of sports, need to do the training in the ACT
- Fund development projects to facilitate innovative implementation of training packages within industry sectors and organisations, particularly where there has been no history of vocational training and qualifications
- Provide increased recurrent funding to the TAFE provider to enable the offering of Certificate 2, 3 and 4 for traineeships where they have not been offered previously
- Need to allow all industries to identify at least one key priority area for their specific sector under the competitive tendering funds eg Sport was not a priority in 2002 under the Industry Training Programs and so private RTO's were unable to apply.

Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT)

3.64. The Canberra Institute of Technology identified two key issues for consideration in relation to the budget and they were: 1. Reducing the casual component of our staffing profile; and 2. Adoption of a CIT smartcard.

Karin Macdonald MLA
Chair

4 April 2002

Appendix 1 -

List of Submissions

1. Mr Monty Dortkamp – Australian Institute of Fitness
2. Ms Maureen Hartung – Blue Gum School
3. Mr Clive Haggard – AEU
4. Dr Ian Morgan – ACT P&C Council
5. Rauney Worm – Noah's Ark Resource Centre Inc.
6. Gavin Findlay, Canberra Youth Music
7. Youth Coalition of the ACT
8. Mr Michael White, ArtsVoice ACT Inc.
9. Mr Geoff Joy, Catholic Education Office
10. Ms Audrey Guy
11. Mr Danial Stubbs, ACTCOSS
12. Ms Beryl Gover, ADHD SUPPORT
13. Treated as correspondence
14. Ms Melanie Greenhalgh, The Junction Youth Health Service
15. Ms Maureen Hartung, Coalition of ACT Schools
16. Ms Karen Connaughton, ACT Down Syndrome Assoc.
17. Ms Jacquie Ford, Advocacy ACTion Inc
18. Ms Heather Karmel, The ANU, The School of music & art
19. Mr Vince Ball, CITC
20. Ms Beryl Gover, ADHD SUPPORT
21. Mr Eric Chalmers, APFACTS

22. Ms Jenny Wardrop, Arts and Recreation Training ACT

23. Mr Peter Veenker, CIT

24. Dr Chris Watson, Kippax Taskforce

Appendix 2 -

Public hearing 12 March 2002 - list of witnesses

1. Australian Education Union ACT Branch
Clive Haggard, Branch Secretary
Fiona McGregor, Assistant Secretary (Professional)
2. Vince Ball, Deputy Chair, Joint Industries Training Advisory Board
3. Helen O'Brien, Community Services ITAB
4. Gerald Crawford, Wholesale and Retail ITAB
5. Secondary Principal's Council
Bob Nield, President
6. Catholic Education Office
Geoff Joy, Director
John Barker, Head of Financial Services
7. CIT Students' Association
Michael Axlesen
Stephanie Jacmon
Elaine Wall
8. Canberra School of Music
John Luxton, Deputy Director
Susan West, Co-ordinator, Music Education Program
Heather Dawn Karmel
9. APFACTS (Association of Parents and Friends ACT Schools)
Eric Chalmers, President
Jim Collins, Member
10. Association of Independent Schools
Joyce Hill, Executive Director

Public hearing 22 March 2002 - list of witnesses

1. ACT P&C Council
Ian Morgan, President