



Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2022-2023 **ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Asked by Ms Jo Clay:

Reference: Hearing on 16 November 2023, Annual Report of the ACT Education Directorate

In relation to: Upgrades to outdoor areas at Public Schools

- (1) How much this term has been spent on upgrades to outdoor areas, including play spaces and nature areas, at ACT public schools?
- (2) How much of this amount has been spent per electorate?
- (3) What criteria does the Education Directorate use to determine which schools require upgrades?
- (4) What criteria does the Education Directorate use to determine what upgrades are needed at a particular school?
- (5) Is there a minimum infrastructure standard for outdoor areas and play spaces at ACT public schools?
- (6) How much this term has been spent on upgrades to outdoor areas, including play spaces and nature areas, at ACT independent schools?

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

- (1) For the financial year 2023-24 (incorporating school terms 3 and 4 current spending year to date) the Education Directorate has spent \$2,117,414.44 on external learning and playground upgrades.
- (2) The Education Directorate does not monitor expenditure by electorate, however, external learning and playground upgrades projects completed or currently in construction across ACT Public Schools include Gowrie Primary School, Curtin Primary School, Hughes Primary School, Mawson Primary School, Arawang Primary School, Woden School, Florey Primary School, Birrigai School, Namadgi School, Ngunnawal Primary School, Gold Creek Junior and Evatt Primary School.
- (3) The Public Schools Infrastructure Renewal Program budget is assigned through an annual request for school infrastructure projects. Each September through the Schools Bulletin Education Intranet, information is provided for schools to self-determine and submit infrastructure upgrade applications by week two of term three (mid-October).

The inclusive program is a separate process that commences in term 2 of each year once school enrolments have identified individual transitioning students' inclusive needs. The Directorate work closely with allied health occupational therapists to ensure schools are ready for day one, term one of the new school year.

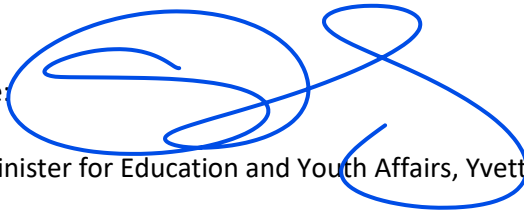
(4) All requests from schools are assessed against Module 7 of the Schools Operational Manual. Supported requests are evaluated through a prioritisation matrix to establish a risk dimension and assigned an overall prioritisation score and risk rating. The prioritisation matrix considers a range of factors including (but not limited to) impact on education and learning, safety, accessibility, community needs, technology, sustainability and community expectations.

(5) The Education Directorate's Infrastructure Specification Document covers the functional area requirements to support learning through outdoor play and promote a healthy lifestyle through exercise. The external spaces must be activated with services, pavements, shelter, and landscaping elements that support a range of learning activities applicable to the learning context. External learning and playground areas provide spaces for imaginative and free form play provide exposure to natural materials and natural processes enable discovery in nature with natural materials enrich the sensory environment support gross motor development present physical challenges and encourage learners to stretch themselves.

(6) The Education Directorate does not retain information regarding ACT independent schools.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

Signature:

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

Date: 06/12/23

By the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Yvette Berry MLA