



SECTION B
Consultation and Scrutiny Reporting

B1 Community engagement

The Department undertakes a range of community engagement activities through community consultation processes, stakeholder relations and community partnership programs. The Department's community engagement activities are aligned with the ACT Government's Community Engagement initiative.

Core strategies for community consultation and engagement

Government and non-government schools education councils

Ongoing community consultation concerning public and non-government school education is provided through the operation of two school education councils. Membership on both councils consists of community and education members representing significant stakeholder groups. Each council prepares an annual report for the Minister, which is annexed to this report.

As required under the *Education Act 2004*, the Non-government Education Section of the Department publishes a notice in a daily newspaper of all applications from non-government schools to register a school, an additional educational level or an additional campus. The community is invited to provide written comment to the proposal.

School boards

Each public school has a school board made up of parents and citizens, departmentally appointed and board appointed members, principals, students and staff. The role of school boards includes establishing the strategic direction and priorities for the school and developing relationships between the school and the community.

In response to stakeholder feedback the Department trialled online school board elections in 2009. Results from the trial suggested that the online election process reduced the administrative burden for the schools and enhanced transparency. Online school board elections are an optional alternative for all schools from 2010.

Key stakeholder groups

The Chief Executive and other senior departmental staff meet on a regular basis with the executive of the ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations (P&C Associations), the Australian Education Union, the Catholic Education Office, the Association of Independent Schools and the ACT Principals' Association to discuss key issues and progress on major initiatives.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Body

In June 2009, the appointment of nine Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to the newly structured ACT Indigenous Education Consultative Body (IECB) was confirmed, with the first official meeting held in July 2009. The IECB consisted of three community members and six parents. The Department provided secretariat support for the IECB.

In September 2009, the IECB changed its name to the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Group. The consultative group met on a monthly basis, since their appointment, to begin the process of developing a plan for the period 2010 to 2013 coinciding with Council of Australian Government's planning cycles and to establish a consultation strategy plan.

ACT Safe Schools Taskforce

The Safe Schools Taskforce comprises representatives of the Department, Australian Education Union, P&C Associations, ACT Principals' Association, ACT Policing, Canberra Preschool Society and the Youth Advisory Council. During the reporting period representatives of the Catholic Education Office, the Association of Parents and Friends of ACT Schools, and the Association of Independent Schools joined the Taskforce.

Key achievements of the Taskforce included strengthening links with ACT Policing, advising on the nature of school safety audits, and reviewing policies that provide guidance and direction to schools in promoting safe school environments.

A working party was established in December 2009 to develop an approach to increasing awareness about cyber bullying and internet safety. A number of proposals are being considered by the Taskforce to support initiatives already underway in schools.

Major community consultations

A number of specific community consultations were undertaken in this reporting period. Of most significance was consultation on:

- the Australian Early Development Index
- the Review of Special Education Provision in the ACT
- proposals to change the school leaving age
- design of new schools and projects funded under the Australian Government's Building the Education Revolution program
- a range of vocational education and training initiatives.

Australian Early Development Index

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) was endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments as a national progress measure of early childhood development.

In the ACT, a coordinator was funded by the Commonwealth to assist with the data collection throughout 2009. Data was released in December 2009, and informed communities about children's development in local areas. Following the publication of the data, the coordinator assisted with the dissemination of information and community engagement with the data.

The ACT AEDI coordinator completed the first round of community meetings in February and March 2010. Most key stakeholders in each ACT region participated and engagement around the AEDI results was high. Discussions enabled links to be made across representatives of different networks. Some participants indicated they would use the AEDI results to further existing or planned initiatives. Many of the participants offered to be AEDI Champions for children and take active roles in the next phase of community engagement and action.

The knowledge of people working in each of the regions contributed to a greater appreciation of what the AEDI results might mean and augured well for more targeted examination of the results in workshops planned for the second half of 2010 by the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (DHCS). The AEDI was transferred from the Department to DHCS on 24 May 2010. This transfer will allow DHCS to progress the initiative to engage communities in relation to the AEDI data and the recruitment of local champions to work with regional community groups and service providers in supporting early childhood initiatives.

AEDI Consultation *continued*

Line area	Project	Consultation process	Group and individuals consulted	Approximate numbers consulted	Outcome
Learning and Teaching Branch	Australian Early Development Index	Community information meetings with key stakeholders	Non-government agencies; Principals, staff and teachers; AEDI committee	64	Workshops to be planned for the second half of 2010 for targeted examination of results Participants offering to be AEDI Champions for children

Review of special education provision

The Department conducted a review of special education provision, initially for public schools and extended, in June 2009, to include non-government schools. The objective was to review leading practice in curriculum and pedagogy for the range of students with disabilities. The review team was chaired by Professor Tony Shaddock (University of Canberra) and included Dr Loretta Giorelli, Dr Michael Arthur Kelly, Ms Julie Hook and Ms Nancy MacDonald.

The main period for community and stakeholder consultation occurred in 2008-09. Consultation on the draft report continued in 2009-10 with the Department's Disability Education Reference Group. Membership of the reference group included representatives of the P&C Associations, the University of Canberra, the Australian Association of Special Education and specific disability groups.

The review was completed on time, with the report being provided to the Minister in October 2009. The report was included

Line area	Project	Consultation process	Group and individuals consulted	Approximate numbers consulted	Outcome
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Student Support Branch	Review of Special Education Services	Two meetings with the Disability Education Reference Group were held during the reporting period	Disability Education Reference Group	10	Report provided to the Minister in October 2009

in the ACT Government's submission to the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs Inquiry into the Needs of Students with a Disability.

A draft Disability Education Strategic Plan is currently being developed.

Engaging young people in education and training options

The ACT has committed to three key reforms under the National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions:

- introducing an ACT Youth Commitment initiative
- reviewing structured workplace learning to ensure it is embedded in school practices
- enabling the implementation of vocational education and training-based learning in alternative programs such as CCCares and the Connect10 program.

The design of these reforms and the ACT Implementation Plan for the National Partnership was informed by a reference

group of key stakeholders involved directly in education and also those associated with the support of young people in the ACT.

The Department conducted broader consultation with key stakeholders in the development of the Youth Commitment initiative. A major stakeholder forum, held on 29 October 2009, was an opportunity for the Department to seek meaningful feedback and engage in genuine consultation around the development of the Youth Commitment. In 2010 the Department established the Youth Commitment Steering Group to continue to guide the initiative's implementation.

The ACT Youth Commitment will establish a new set of expectations for ACT schools and the community regarding young people's experience in schooling and transitions onto further education, training and work.

Line area	Project	Consultation process	Groups/individuals consulted	Approximate number consulted	Outcome
Training and Tertiary Education Branch	Engaging Young People in Education and Training Options	Stakeholder forum	Young people; parents and carers; education providers; principals; teachers; counsellors and career advisers; employers; registered training organisations; Canberra Institute of Technology	31 consultations were held with varying attendance at each	Informed the design and project planning of the ACT Youth Commitment

Vocational and education training (VET) community consultation

The Department continues to consult broadly on VET with business, industry and the community in the ACT.

The Department facilitated consultation to gather comprehensive data and advice on VET in the ACT. These consultations will inform the

development of an ACT Annual VET Priorities 2010, which will be published later in 2010.

The publication will detail the VET priority industries, occupations and qualifications identified by the Department.

Line area	Project	Consultation process	Groups/ individuals consulted	Approximate number consulted	Outcome
Training and Tertiary Education Branch	VET industry, stakeholder and community consultation	Let's Talk VET Professional Development Forum held 21 to 22 April 2010	ACT and interstate Registered Training Organisations; Group Training Organisations; Australian Apprenticeship Centres; Employers; ACT & Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry; National Industry Skills Councils; Australian Council of Private Education and Training; ACT Association of Providers of Training Services; Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations	200	Session discussions integrated into strategic planning and policy development in the tertiary education sector. Professional development provided in e-learning, workforce planning, job pathways and accessing ACT and Australian Government skills initiatives

Urambi primary school

Consultation on the future of Urambi Primary School closed on 7 August 2009 and was undertaken in accordance with the *Education Act 2004*. The outcome of the consultation was considered by Cabinet on 26 October 2009. The Minister announced the Government's decision to close Urambi Primary School at the end of the 2010 school year.

School capital works

In the reporting period, consultation continued with stakeholders on the designs for a number of new schools and on the projects funded under the Australian Government's Building the Education Revolution (BER) program.

Area	Project	Consultation process	Groups/individuals consulted	Approximate number consulted	Outcome
Schools Capital Works Branch	P-10 school in Kambah	Meetings and community presentations	Urambi School community; prospective students and their families; Cabinet in the Community	Varied between meetings and presentation sessions	Presentation of school designs
	Harrison Secondary School	Meetings and community presentations	Design Working Group (representatives from education community, union special interest groups); Gungahlin Community Council; Harrison School community; Cabinet in the Community	22 members in Design Working Group numbers varied between meetings and presentation sessions	Finalisation of secondary school designs on 22 July 2009
	Gungahlin College	Meetings and community presentations	Gungahlin Community Council; Cabinet in the Community	Numbers varied between meetings and presentation sessions	Consultation concluded with presentation of the college designs
	Building the Education Revolution	Meetings	School communities; school principals and staff; school boards; P&C Associations; Cabinet in the Community	All ACT public schools	Designs for 84 National School Pride projects and 68 Primary Schools for the 21st Century projects

Consultation on the design of the new P-10 school in Kambah was concluded, although consultations continued with the Urambi Primary School community on the design for the new environmental centre funded under the BER initiative, including a master plan review and approvals for the preliminary and final sketch plans. On 29 October 2009 the Minister for Education turned the first sod to officially commence construction of the state of the art P-10 school in Kambah.

Discussions on specific school capital improvement projects and repairs and maintenance tasks also occurred to determine the preferences of school communities and options to resolve any identified problems. Discussions with local residents occurred where concerns with a project were raised.

Community partnership programs

School – community partnerships

Community-based partnerships are important for the social and economic sustainability of the ACT. Partnerships between schools and community groups and businesses help schools to respond effectively to the educational needs of, and opportunities presented by, school communities.

The Department has a number of specific partnership programs with ACT community groups and leaders in support of public education. These include ACT Children's Week, the Returned and Services League of Australia (Woden Valley Sub-Branch Incorporated), the United Nations, School Volunteer Program ACT Incorporated and the Australian Business Community Network.

An important initiative in the reporting year was the inauguration of the national Schools First Awards. The program, sponsored by National Australia Bank in collaboration with the Foundation for Young Australians and

Australian Council for Educational Research, encourages schools to partner with the community. Two ACT public schools, Black Mountain School and Canberra College, received \$50,000 Local Impact Awards recognising outstanding community contributions. Canberra College was also awarded the first Schools First National Impact Award of \$750,000 for their CCCares program.

The Department also enters into community sponsorship. Refer to section C15 of this report for more details.

Social media

In mid-2009, the Department established a Facebook page, ACT Public Schools, to provide an additional access point for community information. Engagement with the Department's Facebook page enables interested members of the public to join the group and therefore receive regular updates on public school programs, services and initiatives. Interest in the Facebook page has been increasing both from interstate and the ACT community. Since its inception, 363 people nominated the ACT Public Schools Facebook page as part of their social network.

VET partnership programs

The Youth Attainment and Transitions National Partnership, signed between the Australian Government and all states and territories in July 2009, challenges the ACT to maximise engagement, attainment and successful transitions, and to implement reforms in the areas of multiple learning pathways, career development and mentoring. To achieve these goals, partnerships (with employers and business, with the community sector and parents, and across all sectors of education) will be important to maximise outcomes.

Vocational learning is a key part of the strategy to engage and retain young people in education and training. ACT schools work

positively with other registered training organisations, the Canberra Institute of Technology, and with ACT business and industry to provide the range of authentic learning opportunities that young people need to identify the relevance of educational programs and establish meaningful pathways through school and onto further education, training and employment.

Partnership brokers

Two new programs supporting the Youth and Transitions National Partnership were tendered by the Australian Government in 2009: Youth Connections, and School Business Community Partnership Brokers.

The preferred tenders were announced in December 2009. The preferred tender for the School Business Community Partnership Brokers in the ACT is the ACT and Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the preferred tender for the Youth Connections program is Anglicare.

The School Business Community Partnership Brokers (Partnership Brokers) program will improve community and business engagement with schools to extend learning beyond the classroom, increase student engagement, deepen learning experiences, lift attainment and improve educational outcomes.

Youth Connections will provide an improved safety net for youth at risk through the provision of tailored case management and support to help young people reconnect with education or training and build resilience, skills and attributes that promote positive choices and wellbeing.

Canberra Careers Market

During August 2009, the Canberra Careers Market was convened with over 8,000 young people and career changers attending. The Canberra Careers Market has been in operation for over 20 years and is led by a strong partnership between the Department and the Rotary Club of Canberra City.

Complaints resolution

The Department is committed to fostering positive stakeholder relationships and outcomes. This is underpinned by a culture of accountability, transparency and continuous improvement in client service delivery.

Positive resolution of issues and concerns at the local level is encouraged, however, the Department acknowledges that not all concerns and complaints are able to be resolved informally.

Where a formal complaint is made it is handled under the provisions of the Complaints Resolution policy. This includes information about timeframes, processes, and a complainant's right to ask for a review of the response received if they are not satisfied.

Complaints concerning child abuse and neglect are referred to the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support within the ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services.

New Community Liaison Section

In April 2010, the Department established the Community Liaison Section to address complaints and concerns received from the community and to ensure a consistent approach is applied to complaints management across the Department. The Community Liaison Section has a complaints information officer and all schools

and branches of the Department have a designated complaints' officer.

The Community Liaison Section collects and analyses data and makes recommendations for improvement to policies and service delivery.

The Complaints Resolution policy is available at all public schools and on the Department's website under publications and policies.

The policy will be updated and reviewed during the next reporting period.

Other complaints avenues

The Department may, under a range of administrative law provisions, receive complaints through external complaints agencies.

The *Public Interest Disclosure Act 1994* (see Section C3) contains provisions for reporting wrongdoing in the ACT Public Service.

Formal complaints statistics

Data on formal complaints lodged with the Department from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010 is summarised in the table below. One formal complaint remains open as at 30 June 2010.

Table B1.1: Complaints data, 2009-10

Complainant	Communication	Discrimination/harassment	Personal conduct	Policy and procedures	Service provision	Other	Total
Parent/carer	1	5	7	7	2	2	24
Community member	0	0	1	1	0	1	3
Students	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	5	8	8	2	3	27

Source: Department of Education and Training, unpublished

For more information contact:

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(02) 6205 7200

B2 Internal and external scrutiny

The Department's activities are subject to scrutiny through a range of processes. These include our internal corporate governance and auditing processes and through parliamentary committees, courts, administrative tribunals, the ACT Auditor-General's Office, the ACT Ombudsman, Human Rights Commissioner and the Privacy Commissioner.

Internal scrutiny

The Department has strong organisational controls in place to maintain an appropriate level of internal scrutiny and to support its legislative functions, objectives and performance targets.

Core departmental governance arrangements, including corporate planning and performance management accountability processes, are supplemented by strong internal audit and risk management functions and the role of Senior Executive Responsible for Business Integrity Risk.

Each of these aspects of security is discussed in other sections of this annual report as detailed below:

- corporate governance framework is outlined in section C5
- fraud control and management is outlined in section C2
- internal audit and risk management are outlined in section C1
- financial reporting and accountabilities are outlined in section A6.

External scrutiny

External reviews, appeals and complaints

The Department's Governance and Legal Liaison Section coordinates responses to complaints made under a range of administrative law provisions. These include:

- *Ombudsman Act 1989 (ACT)*, regarding administrative actions of the Department
- *Human Rights Commission Act 2005 (ACT)*, regarding the provision of education services
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Act 1986 (Commonwealth)*
- *Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)*, regarding matters relevant to this legislation
- *Discrimination Act 1991 (ACT)*.

During the reporting period the Department received four new inquiries under the provisions of this legislation: three of these matters remain ongoing; one was resolved. In addition, four matters remained active from previous reporting periods. Three of these matters were resolved while one is ongoing.

A total of four matters were resolved during the reporting period. In respect of three matters the relevant agency ceased investigation. One matter was conciliated. Progress of the four unresolved matters will be reported in 2010-11.

Information about formal avenues for complaints in addition to the Department's complaints resolution process is included in the Department's Complaints Resolution policy and provided to clients as part of the complaints resolution process.

Administrative actions

On 1 February 2009, the *ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2008* came into effect. This Act established the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT), which replaced a number of tribunals including the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and the Discrimination Tribunal.

In 2008-09 an application was made by a student who was unsuccessful in gaining a place in an educational program. During this reporting period the ACAT determined that it did not have jurisdiction in relation to this application. The matter was closed.

Protection orders

A protection order is an order made by a court requiring a person not to approach, contact or behave in a violent or harassing manner towards another person or a workplace. During the year, two applications (on behalf of schools) were made to the Magistrate's Court for workplace protection orders.

The Department is working with the Magistrate's Court to establish a protocol to assist in the resolution of disputes giving rise to protection orders between students at the same school.

Privacy

The Department is governed by the Information Privacy Principles set out under the *Privacy Act 1988* relating to the way in which the Department collects, safeguards, uses and discloses personal information. The Department is also governed by the health privacy principles set out in the *Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act 1997* (ACT).

Under a memorandum of understanding with the ACT Department of Justice and Community Safety, the Office of the Privacy Commissioner provides privacy services for ACT government agencies, including conducting audits. The Department used the services of the ACT Government Solicitor for privacy awareness and training.

External audits

The Auditor-General's Office is an observer on the Department's Audit Committee. During the year, its representative provided regular reports to the Committee which included advice on matters affecting the Department.

In 2009-10, the Department participated in an audit conducted by the Auditor-General's Office regarding student services for public high schools.

The Audit Office issued an unqualified audit report on the Department's 2008-09 financial report and an unqualified report of factual findings on its 2008-09 Statement of Performance.

The Audit Office assessed the overall control environment of the Department to be strong. The Auditor-General's reports recommended an external review of the Department's internal audit function. The external review of the internal audit function commenced on 28 June 2010 and will be concluded in August 2010. The annual report for 2010-11 will report on findings. All recommendations from the Audit Office reports in 2008-09 have been addressed.

Table B2.1: External audits conducted by the Auditor-General's Office, 2009-10

Nature of inquiry/ report title	Recommendations/outcome of inquiry	Response to the outcome of inquiry
<p>Government Office Accommodation</p> <p>Report number: 6/2009</p> <p>Tabled: 28 August 2009</p>	<p>The relocation of the Department's Central Office to 220 Northbourne Avenue, Braddon was generally well delivered; however, there was a lack of staff consultation and documentation about key decisions behind the Department's relocation.</p> <p>Improvements could be made to the usage of energy and water and the reporting of energy and water efficiency in the annual report.</p>	<p>The Department has agreed with the recommendations and will use the information to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meet its obligations under the whole-of-government accommodation strategy • improve efficiency opportunities for the Department in relation to long-term accommodation and communication strategies, record keeping, and business continuity planning • continue to improve its internal administrative practices in these areas and work closely with the Department of Territory and Municipal Services to implement and apply the findings and recommendations from this audit report.
<p>2008-09 Financial Audits</p> <p>Report number: 8/2009</p> <p>Tabled: 19 December 2009</p>	<p>The Audit Office issued an unqualified audit report on the Department's 2008-09 financial report and an unqualified report of factual findings on its 2008-09 Statement of Performance.</p> <p>The Audit Office recommended improvements to the Department's methods for measuring satisfaction with public high school and primary school education, and the timeliness of home education registration reviews.</p>	<p>The Department has agreed with the recommendations and has used the information to improve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the method of measuring satisfaction with public high school and primary school education • evidence-based record keeping on the conduct of home education reviews.

Table B2.1: External audits conducted by the Auditor-General's Office, 2009-10 *continued*

Nature of inquiry/ report title	Recommendations/outcome of inquiry	Response to the outcome of inquiry
<p>Performance Reporting</p> <p>Report number: 1/2010</p> <p>Tabled: 13 April 2010</p>	<p>The Audit Office concluded that performance indicators of the Department sufficiently covered key activities and most indicators were clear and useful.</p> <p>The annual report of the Department was accurate and reasonably complete.</p> <p>Most of the other findings were related to other departments.</p>	<p>The Department noted recommendations arising from this cross-agency audit. There were no specific recommendations for the Department.</p> <p>However, the Department has since made further improvements, including providing comparative information on its performance indicators.</p>

For more information contact:

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Telephone 02 6205 7661

Table B2.1: External audits conducted by the Auditor-General's Office, 2009-10 *continued*

Nature of inquiry/ report title	Recommendations/outcome of inquiry	Response to the outcome of inquiry
<p>Student Support Services for Public High Schools</p> <p>Report number: 2/2010</p> <p>Tabled: 21 May 2010</p>	<p>The Audit Office recommended that the Department should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve performance indicators for a suite of student support services • review the effectiveness of current school disciplinary policies • determine and communicate available information to better access external services • Identify systematic risks associated with the delivery of services • monitor counsellor supervision and records of professional supervision and better practice • develop pathways to employ psychologists without teaching qualifications • review mechanisms by which counsellor time is allocated in schools • collect and analyse data on performance measurement of services • evaluate pastoral care and community based services from external providers • develop and evaluate professional learning plans • redesign referral database and evaluate performance measures and effectiveness of Student Management Consultants and Complex Needs Team services. 	<p>The Department has agreed in full or in part with all recommendations and implemented a majority of them, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improvements to the existing student support services performance indicators to align them with the Department's new Strategic Plan (2010–2013) and the 2010–2011 Student Support Services Branch Business Plan • completion of an audit of safe school policies in 2009 (effectiveness of policies reviewed as part of the standard policy review cycle) • development of an improved communication strategy with relevant government and community partners • an undertaking of improvements to risk management planning specific to school counsellors • monitoring counsellors practices against Australian Professional Counselling and Psychology Standards • an update of recruitment policies and websites • a review of time allocation for counsellors • implementation of the Student Support Practice Standards through 2010 • continuation with Pastoral Care Coordinators to evaluate external programs • an undertaking to enhance learning plans • development of performance measures to support the evaluation of Student Management Consultants and Complex Needs Team.

B3 Legislative Assembly committee inquiries and reports

The Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs (the Standing Committee) and the Select Committee on Estimates 2010-11 (the Select Committee) conduct inquiries and prepare reports on issues relevant to operational and strategic functions of the Department of Education and Training (the Department).

The Standing Committee is currently holding an inquiry into Needs of ACT Students with a Disability. The ACT Government provided a submission to the inquiry in November 2009.

The Committee finalised and tabled the following three reports relating to the Department during 2009-10.

Report 2: School closures and reform of the ACT education system 2006
Presented 17 September 2009

Report 3: Inquiry into the Educational Achievement Gap in the ACT
Presented 6 May 2010

Report 4: Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2008-2009
Presented 6 May 2010

ACT Government responses to Committee reports are available at <http://www.parliament.act.gov.au>.

The Select Committee finalised and tabled one report during 2009-10, the *Appropriation Bill 2010-2011*. The report was presented on 22 June 2010.

Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs

Report 1: Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2007-2008

Presented 9 May 2009

The ACT Government response to the *Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2007-2008* was provided to the Assembly on 15 October 2009. The Department responded to two of the six recommendations.

Recommendation number	Government response	Departmental implementation
1. The committee recommends that the ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority provide comparative energy, waste and greenhouse gas data in each successive annual report.	Agreed	The ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority provided the required information in their 2008-09 report.
2. The committee recommends that the ACT Government advise the committee of all classes in all public schools where the individual class size is above 21 students.	Agreed	The ACT Government provided the information about class sizes in the government response.

Report 2: School closures and reform of the ACT education system

Presented 17 September 2009

The ACT Government response to the inquiry into *School closures and reform of the ACT education system 2006* was tabled on 14 December 2009.

The Department responded to seven of the 15 recommendations. A summary of these recommendations is provided below.

Recommendation number	Government response	Departmental implementation
7. The committee recommends that the consultation period of at least six months be maintained for individual school closures as set out in Section 20 of the Education Act 2004 and that consultation should incorporate a social impact study.	Agreed in part	Section 20(b) of the Act requires a six-month consultation period. Social impacts are a requirement as per section 20(5) (a) of the Act. As required under the Act, social impact was considered during the extensive consultation.
9. The committee recommends that the Minister for Education undertake a social impact assessment of the Towards 2020 reform process and report back to the Legislative Assembly on the findings. The social impact assessment should document the social impacts that have occurred as a consequence of the Towards 2020 implementation process and establish whether mitigation strategies deployed have been adequate.	Agreed in part	Social impact studies were undertaken during the extensive consultation. The Department supported affected students and their families by providing \$750 transition assistance payment. From 2006-07, \$3.5 million over four years was allocated by the ACT Government to support closing and receiving schools, the re-allocation of special education units and other programs.
11. The committee recommends that the Department ensures that primary school boards with governance responsibilities for amalgamated preschools include a member of the Preschool Parents Association.	Noted	The Department encourages all school boards to nominate a preschool parent to be a board appointed nominee.

Report 2: School closures and reform of the ACT education system continued

Recommendation number	Government response	Departmental implementation
<p>12. The committee recommends that the ACT Government include, as part of the social impact assessment to be undertaken, the effect of preschool closures on the operation and viability of playgroups in the ACT.</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>The Department works closely with the ACT Playgroups Association to undertake analysis into short and long-term demand for playgroups and to facilitate access to available preschool units.</p> <p>In addition, the old Scullin Preschool site at the Southern Cross Early Childhood School and the Nimbin Street Preschool site at the Narrabundah Early Childhood School have been kept as outpost sites for playgroups.</p>
<p>13. The committee recommends that, based on the demographic, educational, social and economic evidence presented during the inquiry, that the Government immediately commences the process to reopen the Hall and Tharwa Primary Schools.</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>The Department supports viable early childhood settings including playgroups, preschool access for three year-olds, expanded preschool hours and access to full-time preschool programs at Hall and Tharwa.</p> <p>The Hall preschool program currently has 10 four year-old children and five three year-old children enrolled.</p> <p>The Tharwa preschool program currently has 15 four year-old children enrolled. There are no three year-old children enrolled.</p> <p>The Government also permits registered non-government education providers to use part of the Hall site for educational purposes, subject to existing registration processes.</p>

Report 2: School closures and reform of the ACT education system continued

Recommendation number	Government response	Departmental implementation
14. The committee recommends that data about school capacity be regularly reviewed by the Department and provided to each public school and the school community for endorsement. Where this data is disputed by the school or the community of interest, an independent review process should be established to resolve perceived discrepancies to the satisfaction of the school and the Department.	Noted	School capacity is reviewed annually and school enrolment data is reviewed twice-yearly and published in the ACT school census in February and August of each year. The enrolment data is subject to intense scrutiny and is audited annually for February census. Schools provide enrolment data to their communities via the school board annual report.
15. The committee recommends that the Department undertake, and make publicly available, research on the educational outcomes for students relocated in ACT public schools as a consequence of the Towards 2020 restructure.	Not agreed	The educational progress of individual students is monitored at the school level and communicated to parents and carers on a regular basis. Individual student outcomes remain a matter for parents, carers, students and teachers involved, and are not a matter for the general public.

Report 3: *Inquiry into the Educational Achievement Gap in the ACT*

Presented 6 May 2010

The Government response to the report on the *Inquiry into the Educational Achievement Gap in the ACT* will be provided to the Assembly in the 2010-11 reporting period. Details of the response will therefore be included in the Department's 2010-11 annual report.

Report 4: *Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2008-2009*

Presented 6 May 2010

The ACT Government response to the *Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2008-2009* will be provided to the Assembly in the 2010-11 reporting period. Details of the response will therefore be included in the Department's 2010-11 annual report.

Select Committee on Estimates 2010-2011

Appropriation Bill 2010-2011

Presented 22 June 2010

The Select Committee inquiry into *Appropriation Bill 2010-2011* provided a report with 47 recommendations on a wide range of issues. The ACT Government response, which was tabled on 29 June 2010, agreed to 19 recommendations, agreed in principle to four recommendations, agreed in part to one recommendation, noted 17 recommendations, and did not agree to six recommendations.

The Department has responsibility for three of the committee's recommendations. The short time between the tabling of the Government response and the end of the reporting period did not allow for progress to be made against the recommendations.

Recommendation	Government response
27. The committee recommends that the Department develop accountability indicators which can measure the views of the principal users of public education services: students and parents/carers.	Agreed in principle
28. The committee recommends that future budget papers include accountability measures and outcome targets for the Productivity Places Program.	Agreed
29. The committee recommends that the Department and Corrections ACT partner to ensure the provision of adult education and vocational training packages which best establish opportunities for the restoration of detainees of the Alexander Maconochie Centre back into the community.	Agreed

For more information contact:

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B4 Legislative report

The Department of Education and Training is identified against six pieces of legislation in the Administrative Arrangements:

- *Board of Senior Secondary Studies Act 1997*
- *Building and Construction Industry Training Levy Act 1999*
- *Canberra Institute of Technology Act 1987*
- *Education Act 2004*
- *Training and Tertiary Education Act 2003*
- *University of Canberra Act 1989.*

The Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) and the University of Canberra (UC) are not part of the administrative unit of the Department of Education and Training. The Chief Executive of the Department has no direct responsibility for the CIT and the UC, and the Minister has not delegated any powers in respect of the *Canberra Institute of Technology Act 1987* and the *University of Canberra Act 1989*.

Amendments to the above legislation notified during the reporting period are as follows:

- *Board of Senior Secondary Studies Act 1997* amended by *Statute Law Amendment Act 2009*, notified 1 September 2009.
- *Building and Constructions Industry Training Levy Act 1999* amended by *Statute Law Amendment Act 2009*, notified 1 September 2009.
- *Education Act 2004*
 - amended by *Education (Participation) Amendment Act 2009*, notified 17 November 2009
 - amended by *Education (Suspensions) Amendment Act 2010*, notified 3 March 2010
 - amended by *Statute Law Amendment ACT 2010*, notified 13 May 2010

- *Training and Tertiary Education Act 2003* amended by *Statute Law Amendment Act 2009*, notified 26 November 2009.

For more information contact:

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