

SECTION
C

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REPORTING



OTHER REPORTING

C1 Strategic bushfire management plan

In consultation with the ACT Emergency Service Agency, the Department submitted a draft bushfire operation plan for the Birrigai Outdoor School in August 2006. The Bushfire Operation Plan was presented to the Bushfire Council on 14 September 2006 where it received endorsement.

Due to its locality and close proximity to Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, the sites were assessed together to ensure consistency in terms of prevention of a bushfire.

ACT Emergency Services has advised that a Bushfire Operation Plan is not required for other school sites as they are outside the Bushfire Abatement Zone.

For more information contact:

Director

Finance and Facilities

Telephone: (02) 6205 9108

C2 Public interest disclosure

The *Public Interest Disclosure Act 1994* (the PID Act) encourages the disclosure of conduct in the public sector that is adverse to the public interest. The Chief Executive has made information available to staff and the community about procedures for making and handling public interest disclosures.

Information was provided on:

- the purpose of the PID Act
- various contact points where disclosures can be made within and outside the Department
- who can make a disclosure
- types of disclosures that can be made
- how to make a disclosure to the Department
- protection from legal action and advice on cases of victimisation
- feedback to informants
- strategies if dissatisfied with the outcome of an investigation.

Under the Department restructure in September 2006, the nominated officer to receive public interest disclosures is the Director, Governance, Regulation and Risk who replaces the Director, Human Resources and the Manager, Employee Relations.

The nominated contact officer for advice in relation to public interest disclosures is the Manager, Governance and Legal Liaison -Telephone (02) 6205 9159 or (02) 6205 9151.

Summary of disclosures

During the reporting period one disclosure was received under the PID Act . The disclosure related to the conduct of a staff member employed under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*. The investigation of this disclosure is continuing.

The investigation of a disclosure made during the previous reporting period, which related to the conduct of a staff member employed under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*, continued during 2006-07. This investigation found that one allegation fell within the context of the PID Act, but that it was not substantiated.

For more information contact:

Director
Governance, Regulation and Risk
Telephone: (02) 6205 7661

C3 Freedom of information

The ACT *Freedom of Information Act 1989* (the FOI Act) provides a legally enforceable right of access by citizens to all documents in the possession of the ACT Government, subject only to exemptions to protect the legitimate interests of the ACT Government, and of the third parties who deal with the ACT Government. The Act requires certain reports to be compiled and included in the agency annual report. This report comprises two sections for the Department:

- Section 7 statement
- Section 79(2) statement.

A separate Section 8 statement, as required by the Act, can be obtained from the Department's Freedom of Information (FOI) Officer or viewed on the Department's website at <http://www.det.act.gov.au>.

Section 7 statement

In accordance with the requirements of this section of the FOI Act, the following statement is correct to 30 June 2007. It reports on the particulars, functions and powers of the agency, as well as certain categories of documents held by the agency and the arrangements for public participation in the formulation of policy and operations.

Organisational functions and powers

The organisational functions and powers of the Department are described in Section A.8 of this annual report. Legislation administered by the Minister for Education and Training is published in full in the Legislative report in Section B.4 of this annual report.

Public participation in decision-making

Arrangements for public participation in decision-making include public submissions, discussion at public meetings, consultative committees for specific purposes, access to records through FOI requests, comments on draft documents, comments on bills before the Legislative Assembly and contact with the relevant Minister.

Categories of documents

The Department holds several basic categories of documents:

- those that are freely available on request and without charge
- those that are exempt under the FOI Act
- all other kinds of documents that may be available under the FOI Act.

Documents available on request and without charge

Documents within this category include publications produced by the Department on various aspects of its activities. These are usually distributed from government schools throughout the Territory and are generally available on the Department's website <http://www.det.act.gov.au>. Other documents include:

- discussion papers
- information pamphlets
- census data
- annual reports
- policies.

Documents of other kinds that may be available under the Act

Such documents may include:

- general records including internal, interdepartmental and public documents such as minutes of meetings, agendas and background papers, policy statements, correspondence and administrative records
- personnel records
- student records
- records held on microfilm, computer or paper in connection with departmental functions
- financial records
- details of contracts and tenders
- records of government including the machinery of government.

Facilities for access

People seeking information are encouraged to first contact the Department before using the more formal FOI process. The Departmental contact for FOI is:

The FOI Coordinator
 Governance, Regulation and Risk
 ACT Department of Education and Training
 GPO Box 158
 Canberra ACT 2601
 Phone (02) 6205 8229
 Fax (02) 6205 9453

The physical location of the FOI Coordinator is:

220 Northbourne Avenue
 Braddon ACT 2612

A regular bus service is available from most locations in the ACT to within walking distance of this location. Advice on bus services and times is available from www.action.act.gov.au or by calling 13 17 10.

Short-term parking is available at the main entrance with reserved parking for people with disabilities.

For assistance with specific arrangements for access to the physical location, phone the Department on (02) 6205 9400.

Section 79(2) statement

In accordance with section 79(2) of the Act, the following is a report on the decision-making outcomes in relation to the FOI requests received by the Department during the year. FOI requests must be categorised in relation to: full release; partial release; entire exemption; technical refusal (no documents located); still being processed; transferred; and withdrawn.

Requests for access

In 2006-07, the Department received a total of 39 requests for access to documents, the same as that received in 2005-06 (Table 25). Table 26 outlines the access decisions made for these requests.

Table 25: FOI requests

<i>Requests</i>	<i>Number</i>
Number of new requests *	35
Number of requests carried over from previous year	4
Total	39

Source: Department of Education and Training

* One request for access to documents was handled outside the scope of the FOI Act.

Table 26: FOI access decisions

<i>Access decisions</i>	<i>Number</i>
Full release	4
Partial release	27
Technical refusal (no documents)	2
Entire exemption	1
Transferred	0
Withdrawn	2
Incomplete at 30 June 2007	3
Total	39

Source: Department of Education and Training

Internal Review and Administrative Appeals Tribunal applications

Six applications were received under section 59 of the Act to review a decision on an FOI request. Five of these applications resulted in further documents being provided to the applicants.

Three applications were made to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

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Fees and charges

The Department did not collect any fees in relation to the processing of requests.

Amendment of personal records

The Department did not receive any requests under section 48 of the Act for the amendment of personal records.

For more information contact:

Director
Governance, Regulation and Risk
Telephone: (02) 6205 7661

C4 Human Rights Act 2004

Audit of Human Rights Act 2004

The Castan Centre for Human Rights Law conducted a human rights audit of legislation that is administered by the Department, for consistency with the *Human Rights Act 2004*. The Department is reviewing the Castan Centre's report.

Education and training

During this reporting period, the Department arranged the following courses for agency staff that incorporated various human rights principles:

- Staff harmony and communication development

A number of training sessions dealing with conflict resolution, emotional resilience and giving and receiving feedback were conducted by the Department's employee assistance provider. These courses were open to all departmental staff.
- Staff equity contact officer training

This training was presented by staff from the ACT Human Rights Commission for the Department's staff equity contact officers. Another training session included presenters from the Department's employee assistance provider, the teachers' union, as well as departmental staff.
- Graduate Certificate in Inclusive Education

This course is offered by the University of Canberra and delivers a graduate certificate program for teachers. It incorporates units in curriculum and learning difficulties, managing complex behaviours, and a curriculum pedagogy project focussing on students with special needs. Teachers were funded under the Teacher Scholarships program to study this course in 2007.
- Inclusive technology education

A number of courses were presented by the Department's Inclusive Technologies Team for teachers and school assistants and covered various programs and resources available.
- Indigenous education
 - Jervis Bay School Technology development

A four-day professional learning program targeting teachers from Jervis Bay Primary School was delivered by the Department's Learning Technologies Team. This training focussed on the use of digital content and included a significant component on interactive whiteboards.
 - Cultural awareness of Indigenous peoples and equity and diversity

This program was delivered to teachers by the Department's Indigenous Education Unit.

Internal dissemination of information to agency staff on the legislative scrutiny process

ACT Human Rights Commission courses are available to all staff to attend and are widely advertised. All proformas and guidance material regarding legislative and Cabinet processes highlight the need to consult the Human Rights Unit.

Liaison with the Human Rights Unit

The Department consulted with the Human Rights Unit in the preparation of legislation and obtained compatibility statements. The Human Rights Unit raised no issues requiring attention.

For more information contact:

Director
Governance, Regulation and Risk
Telephone: (02) 6205 7661

C5 Commissioner for the Environment

During the reporting period, the Commissioner for the Environment did not request any information from the Department.

For more information contact:

Director
Finance and Facilities
Telephone (02) 6205 9108

C6 ACT Multicultural Strategy 2006-2009

Adult and Community Education

The Department supports a range of community initiatives through the Adult and Community Education (ACE) program. In 2006-07, ACE grants were made to support programs to promote physical and mental health for community members, arts and music skills for disadvantaged groups, improved English language skills for migrants, computer literacy, and skills for participation in community organisations. Further information on these grants can be found in Section A.20 of this report.

Languages education

In the ACT, 34 primary schools offered language programs in this reporting period. This is a decrease of six schools since the February 2006 census. Seventeen high schools (out of 18) and all colleges have language programs. The languages taught are: French, Japanese, Indonesian, German, Spanish, Italian, Chinese and Korean, with Greek being offered in one primary school. School boards determine whether a language will be taught and which language will be offered.

There is one bilingual French program at Telopea Park School. There are two part-immersion programs, one in Italian, currently at Lyons Primary School and another in Mandarin, at Mawson Primary School.

According to the February 2007 census figures there are approximately 8680 students learning a language in primary schools, 3000 in high schools and 1230 in colleges.

In addition to school language programs, the Ethnic Schools Association runs classes after hours and at weekends. There are 44 languages taught in ethnic schools and the Department assists the Association with funding to support these programs.

Cultural and religious acceptance

Schools across Canberra celebrate Harmony Day as recognition of our multicultural society. Other celebrations are held, when relevant, as curriculum enrichment, for example United Nations Day at Narrabundah College or language days such as the Japanese primary schools fun day.

English as a second language (ESL) programs

ESL programs are provided to students in mainstream schools and specialist Introductory English Centres (IECs). While the programs focus on English language skills, fostering participation in and understanding of ACT schooling is an essential component of the ESL teacher's role. Professional learning on culturally inclusive practices promote the maintenance of the home language, access to interpreter services and parent participation in a range of school events.

New arrivals with minimal English language skills have access to one secondary and three primary IECs located across Canberra. Eligible primary age students are provided with transport to attend their nearest centre. Six Bilingual Special Teachers' Assistants (BSTAs) are employed in the IEC programs. Students generally stay in the program for 30 weeks before moving to their school of choice. In 2006, there were 3485 students enrolled in the program.

Studies of Asia

The Studies of Asia Program in the ACT continued to grow with schools adopting the principles of the *National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools* (2005) as part of their curriculum renewal. The program continues to offer support to teachers, schools and professional associations, and provides professional learning workshops, scholarships, study tours and small grants. The annual Studies of Asia conference held in July 2006, the *Myclasses* and the website presence, together with the professional learning workshops, were aimed at increasing teachers' knowledge, skills and understandings of Asia.

Newly arrived migrants and humanitarian settlers

As refugee and humanitarian visa holders settle in Canberra, educational programs are supported by involvement in other services such as Companion House, the Migrant Resource Centre, the Canberra Institute of Technology and Centrecare. Many of the humanitarian entry students have not attended school before and present with complex educational and welfare needs, requiring the involvement of parents in a range of multi-disciplinary services.

For more information contact:

Director
Curriculum Support and Professional Learning
Telephone: (02) 6205 9205

C7 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reporting

Koori preschools

The ACT Government provides preschool education in 79 government preschools and five Koori preschools. The February 2007 census indicated that 79 out of 3499 students were identified as Indigenous. This represents 2.3 percent of the total enrolment.

The February 2007 census indicated that of the 79 students, 20 were enrolled in more than one Koori preschool or in a Koori preschool and a mainstream preschool.

Some of the increase in enrolment can be attributed to the work of the Indigenous home-school liaison officers who promote enrolment of Indigenous students in preschools and encourage parent/caregiver involvement in both the Koori preschools and the general preschools.

Literacy and numeracy

The ACT Assessment Program (ACTAP) results for years 3, 5, 7, 9 continue to suggest that there is improvement being achieved in the outcomes for Indigenous students in those years of schooling. While the percentage of Indigenous students scoring in the lowest quartiles in reading, writing and numeracy strands remains significant, progress is being made.

In 2006, the Indigenous Literacy and Numeracy consultants continued to work with targeted year 4 students and their teachers to improve outcomes for those students in the 2007 ACTAP. Support from the consultants was extended to all staff to engage them in building and extending their capacity for meeting the needs of Indigenous students.

Results for the cohort of targeted Indigenous students enrolled in year 4 in 2005 indicate that the strategies implemented at the school level were successful. Those students, who progressed to year 5 in 2006, recorded an overall improvement of between 3 and 7 points across the three strands assessed.

In addition to working intensively with teachers in targeted schools, the Indigenous Literacy and Numeracy Consultants provided cultural awareness opportunities for teachers in non-targeted schools. Presentations at staff meetings have assisted teachers to develop culturally inclusive English literacy and numeracy programs to respond to the learning needs of Indigenous students and also to provide all students in ACT government schools opportunities to learn about Indigenous Australia.

Outcomes for Indigenous students in year 9 were similar to those for the year 7 cohort of Indigenous students. Indigenous students scored similar outcomes in writing to that of non-Indigenous students (i.e. equivalent proportions in the lower 50 percent).

Year 12 Certificate

The total number of Indigenous students enrolled in year 12 in ACT government colleges in 2006 was 42. Of this cohort, 21 (50 percent) were awarded a Year 12 Certificate.

Five students were awarded a Vocational Education and Training (VET) Certificate and a Year 12 Certificate, while two students achieved a VET Certificate without the Year 12 Certificate. Fourteen students who were awarded a Year 12 Certificate also partially completed a VET Certificate. A total of 11 students finished the year with a partially completed VET Certificate and did not receive a Year 12 Certificate.

Vocational education and training

In 2006-07, the ACT Government funded a wide range of training services for up to 150 Indigenous Australians through its Strategic Priorities Program. The project assisted Indigenous people to access many areas of skills essential for employment through qualifications such as:

- Certificate IV In Arts Administration
- Certificate I, II and IV in Business
- Certificate I in Work Preparation
- Certificate IV in Community Services Advocacy
- Certificate IV in Community Services (Information, Advice and Referral)
- Certificate I in Information Technology
- Certificate III in Children's Services.

Sixty-five Indigenous students commenced apprenticeships and traineeships during the reporting period. Of these, 18.5 percent (12 students) were in training in the business and clerical sector. Forty-eight percent (31 students) are evenly distributed across four sectors: building and construction, community service, health and education, sales and personal services and tourism and hospitality.

Links to National plans and policies

In May 2006, the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) endorsed the report *Australian Directions in Indigenous Education 2005-2008*.

The report identifies the following five domains from which education and training providers implement strategies critical to improving outcomes for Indigenous people:

- early childhood education
- school and community educational partnerships
- school leadership
- quality teaching
- pathways to training, employment and further education.

The Department is represented on the MCEETYA Reference Group on Indigenous Education, which developed a national plan to guide the progress of education and training providers in achieving the recommendations for each domain.

Progress made against the recommendations in the ACT includes:

- the development of a proforma for establishing school and community educational partnerships. This is based on models being used in other jurisdictions.
- a model, developed to assist schools prepare Individual Learning Plans for Indigenous students in K-10. College students will continue to develop student pathways plans.

Relevant sections of the *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2005* include early school engagement and performance (preschool to Year 3) and positive childhood and transition to adulthood. The Department identifies achievements made against these two headline indicators and provides regular reports to the Legislative Assembly.

The Department works with other ACT government agencies to provide an integrated approach to service delivery for identified Indigenous young people and their families.

For more information contact:

Director
Student Services
Telephone: (02) 6205 7029

C8 Ecologically sustainable development

The Department has contributed towards ecologically sustainable development (ESD) in a number of ways.

Water management

Various levels of water restrictions have been in place in the ACT since December 2002. Schools in general have achieved water savings required by stage 2 restrictions (25 percent reduction in consumption), but have found it more difficult to consistently achieve stage 3 restrictions (35 percent reduction in consumption).

The Department and schools have worked cooperatively to achieve reductions in water consumption. Over the past few years, school playing fields have been reduced to a minimum size to match school needs, irrigation systems at schools have been upgraded and modified, cistern displacement devices and low flow taps have been installed in schools, water sensitive urban design principles and rain water storage tanks have been installed at new schools. In the reporting period, water audits were undertaken at 16 schools as part of the Sustainable Schools initiative discussed further below.

Implementation of the recommendations of the water audits at the 16 schools has commenced and will continue into 2007-08. A further program of water audits in schools is also planned for 2007-08.

Energy reduction strategies

Environmentally sustainable design and energy efficiency remain a high priority across departmental assets. The Department seeks to integrate energy sustainable design principles into new and refurbished building construction projects, wherever practicable.

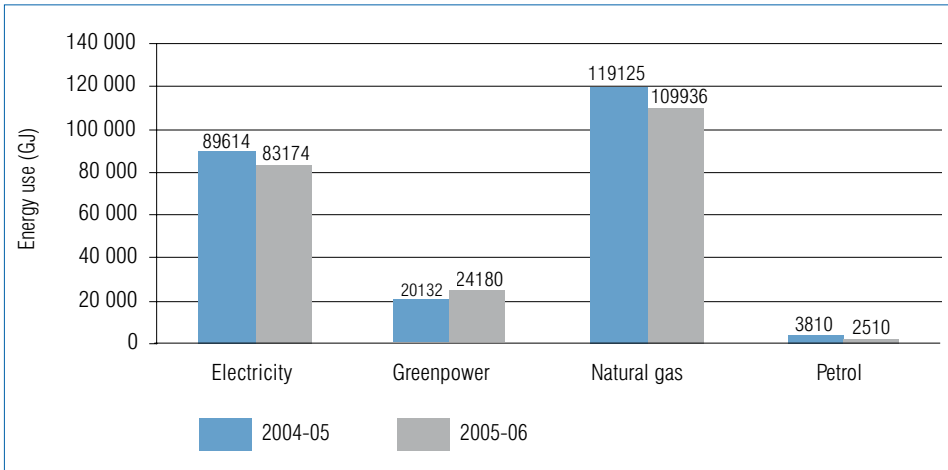
Increasing demand on electrical systems through information technology (IT), enhancement in schools and increased installation of air conditioning equipment (largely made possible by the Australian Government Investing in Our Schools Program) is resulting in increased demand for electrical energy across school sites. To meet the new demands in specific areas of schools, upgrading of electrical supply systems and electrical reticulation is occurring, along with IT system and equipment upgrading.

Notwithstanding this additional demand, electricity consumption over the 2005-06 period (see Note 1, Figure 10) reduced by 2.2 percent (2392 gigajoules) with a mix of increases and decreases across individual schools and preschools. Environmentally friendly green power from renewable sources is purchased by the Department through the whole of government electricity supply contract and comprises 23 percent of electricity consumed.

In 2005-06 (see Note 1, Figure 10), gas consumption decreased by 7.7 percent (9189 GJ) across the Department relative to 2004-05 levels (Figure 10). Gas is mainly consumed for heating.

The reductions in electricity and gas consumption can be related to the impact of energy efficiency devices retrofitted in buildings, such as more efficient heating systems, to seasonal factors resulting in lower consumption of energy for heating purposes and the closure of Ginninderra District High School in 2005.

Figure 10: Energy consumption, 2004–05 and 2005–06¹



Source: Department of Education and Training

Note 1: Energy consumption data collation occurs in arrears with 2005-06 consumption data being reported in 2006-07.

New schools

Construction of the new school for Harrison in east Gungahlin commenced in December 2006. The total cost of the school is expected to be \$23m, with completion scheduled for January 2008.

Design for the new P-10 school in west Belconnen was completed in May 2007. The total cost of the school is \$45m, with construction scheduled to commence in September 2007 and completion scheduled for December 2008.

The designs of the Harrison and west Belconnen schools aim to build on the highly successful Amaroo School model. Features such as safe and highly functional design, water recycling, natural ventilation, natural lighting, thermal mass construction, low maintenance material selection and reduced energy use are high priorities.

Each school's design uses a 'green building approach' in which emphasis is given to making the building more energy efficient, improving air quality, capturing and storing rain water for recycling and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

ESD features of the schools include:

- natural ventilation in all buildings
- night cooling/purging by utilising differences in temperature
- individual buildings containing their own gas fired boiler
- high thermal mass construction to be used to maximise the heat bank characteristics of the buildings
- optimisation of daylight to reduce the need for artificial light
- rainwater collection stored in large underground water storage tanks, to provide water reuse for toilet flushing, plant and garden bed irrigation, and for cleaning the paved area
- low maintenance, environmentally friendly materials used in construction
- a building management system to provide intelligent building controls for lighting, heating and ventilation.

The Department is also in the early planning stages for the Gungahlin College (to open in 2010) and the Tuggeranong P-10 school (to open in 2011). The Department will be incorporating similar ESD features into these schools.

Sustainable schools initiative

In 2006, the Department hosted a pilot of the Australian Government Sustainable Schools Initiative (AuSSI). The schools ranged from preschool to college and included government and non-government schools.

AuSSI ACT is managed by the Department of Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) in partnership with the Department and non-government schools. ACT school case studies have been developed for the sustainable schools website: www.environment.gov.au/education/aussi/index.html

The case studies focus on the sustainable management of energy, water and waste.

The Department has entered into a partnership with the ACT Sustainable Policy and Programs Section (within TAMS), and ACTEWAGL to conduct water audits and provide water efficiency reports to all ACT schools. Each school is provided with a report recommending water reduction initiatives based on the findings.

Water sustainability works

During the reporting period, \$0.43m of capital funding was allocated to fund many of the works recommended from the water audit findings. Audit recommendations included: improved reporting of out of hours leakage by live water use monitoring; upgrading to efficient toilet and urinal systems; reduced flow and auto shut off taps; replacing taps beyond repair; and upgrading irrigation system controls and components.

Vehicle fleets

The total number of departmental fleet vehicles as at 30 June 2007 was 30. Total fuel consumption used by the fleet was 58 421 litres of petrol, 1424 litres of diesel and 5698 litres of LPG. Total greenhouse emissions (tonnes of CO₂) of the fleet for the reporting year were 153 171 tonnes.

Over the past year the fleet has been reduced by 15 vehicles. This, along with the whole-of-government decision to restrict fleet vehicles to four cylinders, has resulted in a reduction of 13 049 litres of petrol and 39 361 tonnes of greenhouse emissions over the year. Eighty-four percent of the Department's fleet vehicles are four cylinders, including one hybrid petrol/electric vehicle. The remaining 16 percent will be exchanged for four cylinder vehicles when the current leases expire.

Office-based sustainability

The Department continues to have in place processes that support sustainability in its offices. These include:

- recycling cardboard and waste paper from office areas
- recycling printer cartridges
- encouraging double-sided copying, helping to reduce paper usage
- installing instant boil and instant taps in kitchen areas in offices, reducing wastage of water and electricity.

As part of the current office accommodation strategy, the Department is presently refurbishing part of the Canberra College (Stirling) for office accommodation. Not only are building systems (heating and air conditioning) being reviewed to improve operational efficiency, a number of other measures are being put in place to support sustainability. These include:

- window reflective security film, which not only provides additional security for staff and property, but also reduces air conditioning costs and deterioration of furniture and fittings
- diffusers to existing lighting to improve overall lighting and energy efficiency
- recycling materials, where possible, including recycled:
 - doors and door furniture
 - light fittings, emergency lights and exit lights
 - timber from demolished walls for new sprandel panels
 - venetian blinds
 - ceiling tiles
 - redundant laboratory equipment and joinery to another school
 - aluminium skirtings and trims.

In addition to satisfying statutory requirements, the Department gives high priority to the environmental impacts of projects in terms of building design, energy efficiency and environmental sustainability. The Department has also incorporated awareness of environmental issues in the school curriculum through the new ACT curriculum framework from preschool to year 10.

The Department regularly monitors and evaluates energy and water consumption levels across all major sites. Energy usage is monitored in school and office buildings and the motor vehicle fleet. At schools, the consumption performance is monitored on a monthly basis, while centrally, consumption data is compiled annually. Usage trends are analysed and remedial action taken where problems or opportunities for improvement are identified.

For more information contact:

Director

Finance and Facilities

Telephone: (02) 6205 9108

C9 ACT Women's Plan

The *ACT Women's Plan* establishes a shared approach between agencies for working towards the ACT Government's vision to improve the status of all women and girls.

During the reporting period, the specific actions taken by the Department in relation to each of the objectives it has committed to are provided below.

Objective one: Representation and recognition

The Department's *Equity and Diversity Plan 2007-2009* is available to all staff on-line and was included in induction packages.

International Women's Day was celebrated on 8 March 2007.

Objective two: Good health and well-being

ACT government colleges operate Health Expos each year. Community and government organisations attend and provide advice and information for young people on a range of health issues.

School safety checks are used to evaluate the extent to which health and safety is actively managed in workplaces and to identify workplace hazards and work practices that put people at risk of violence. It is a mandatory departmental requirement to complete school safety checks.

A youth worker operates at each ACT government high school. The Department is continuing to promote the Health Promoting Schools program to improve the health and well-being of school students.

Through the Canberra College Cares program, the Department provides access to education programs and offers services to support young mothers in providing appropriate health care for their children and themselves. The program operates in partnership with a variety of health services to address the needs of young women enrolled in this educational program in a safe and supportive environment that aims to support social and emotional well-being.

Objective three: Responsive housing

The Department does not contribute to this objective.

Objective four: Safe, inclusive communities

During the reporting period, training was provided to Staff Equity Contact Officers (SECOs) on cultural awareness and responding to discrimination and workplace harassment.

The Department also provided professional learning opportunities for staff on dealing with conflict in the workplace, work-life balance, emotional resilience, achieving and maintaining career satisfaction, and giving and receiving feedback.

Information sessions were provided to all new teachers on the *Code of Professional Practice* to inform them of the required standard of ethical behaviour and ensure staff and students are not subjected to workplace harassment or sexual harassment.

The Department promoted the Restorative Practices program in school communities as a way of promoting a non-coercive and non-punitive approach to a variety of challenging and anti-social behaviours. The Department provided support to schools to assist them to embed restorative practices in their schools.

The Department published a *Providing Safe Schools P-12 policy* for schools to promote supportive and safe learning environments in all schools. It was launched on 15 May 2007 as a package of revised policies including:

- *Countering Racism in ACT Public Schools*
- *Countering Bullying, Harassment and Violence in ACT Public Schools*
- *Countering Sexual Harassment in ACT Public Schools*
- *Suspension, Exclusion or Transfer in ACT Public Schools.*

Schools commenced development and implementation of procedures to promote safe and supportive learning environments in line with the above policies.

The Department's Emergency Management Framework, which was launched in July 2005, contains policy and guidelines on emergencies involving violence. It provides managers and school principals with a concise reference to facilitate emergency management planning. Within this context, schools have been issued with the *Unwelcome Visitors to Schools Handbook* that provides information to assist principals and authorised persons in schools to manage trespassing and/or threatening or violent behaviour on school premises.

Schools report on the *National Safe Schools Framework* on an annual basis as part of their annual School Board reporting procedures.

School safety audits were conducted in 2007. Schools have been taking action to address recommendations. Site-based training has been contracted to occur in the second half of 2007 in all schools and central office to facilitate a revision of their lockdown procedures.

Objective five: Economic security and opportunities

The Department's *Equity and Diversity Plan* outlines the Department's commitment and strategies to increase employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians and people with an impairment or disability, including women. The Department has also committed to promote part-time work and work-life balance programs for current and future employees.

Objective six: Flexible education and training

The ACT Government has a strong commitment to vocational education and training (VET) as a means of contributing to the economic and social well-being of the ACT. Women and girls are given opportunities through all VET programs offered in the ACT.

Specifically, vocational learning programs in schools provide opportunities for all students to explore and pursue a variety of career pathways. Work experience programs give students an opportunity to sample a variety of industries before identifying a preferred career pathway. Australian School-based Apprenticeships (ASBAs) also generate opportunities for young women to pursue careers across all skill and trade areas. The inclusive nature of vocational learning programs and the breadth of industries available in schools and colleges across the ACT has provided access for young women and girls to a wide variety of training opportunities.

The Strategic Priorities Program (SPP) is designed to meet the skills needs of ACT citizens, business and industry, contribute to employment and economic growth and address issues of social inclusion. SPP is very successful in addressing specific issues faced by women and girls. It supports VET programs that provide real opportunities for women to have their skills recognised and to move back into the workforce or to change careers. It does this through the provision of gap training for existing workers and the up-skilling of females not currently in the workforce who may require extra skill sets to add to their extensive work experience.

Of the 324 ASBAs that commenced in the ACT in 2006, 126 (39 percent) were female. Females engaged in ASBAs across a wide variety of industries including aged care, automotive, building and construction, business and clerical, children's services, community pharmacy, hairdressing, horticulture, hospitality, retail, sport and recreation and tourism.

Indigenous education has provided employment opportunities for Indigenous women through the Home School Liaison Officer program during the reporting period.

Canberra College Cares, continues to provide an educational setting for young mothers, to continue their education in a supportive and caring environment. The program enables young mothers to access a registered playgroup, onsite child minding, a community nurse for fortnightly health checks and a range of educational and social experiences to support young mothers in their role as parents.

In June 2007, a second site for Canberra College Cares was established at Lake Ginninderra College to provide easier access to young mothers, parents and carers who reside in northern Canberra.

The Eclipse and Stay programs at the Stirling campus of Canberra College and the Supporting Individuals Through Education (SITE) program at Dickson College, continued to operate. These programs provide alternative education opportunities for students aged 14 to 21 years. The programs have a more flexible approach to engaging students with education and aim to support students to continue their education and build on their strengths. These programs operate in partnership with the Connecting Young Carers to Life Opportunities and Personalised Support program, ACT Health and other agencies.

For more information contact:

Director
Measurement, Monitoring and Reporting
Telephone: (02) 6205 5512