

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
ANNUAL REPORT 2004-05



Australian Capital Territory
EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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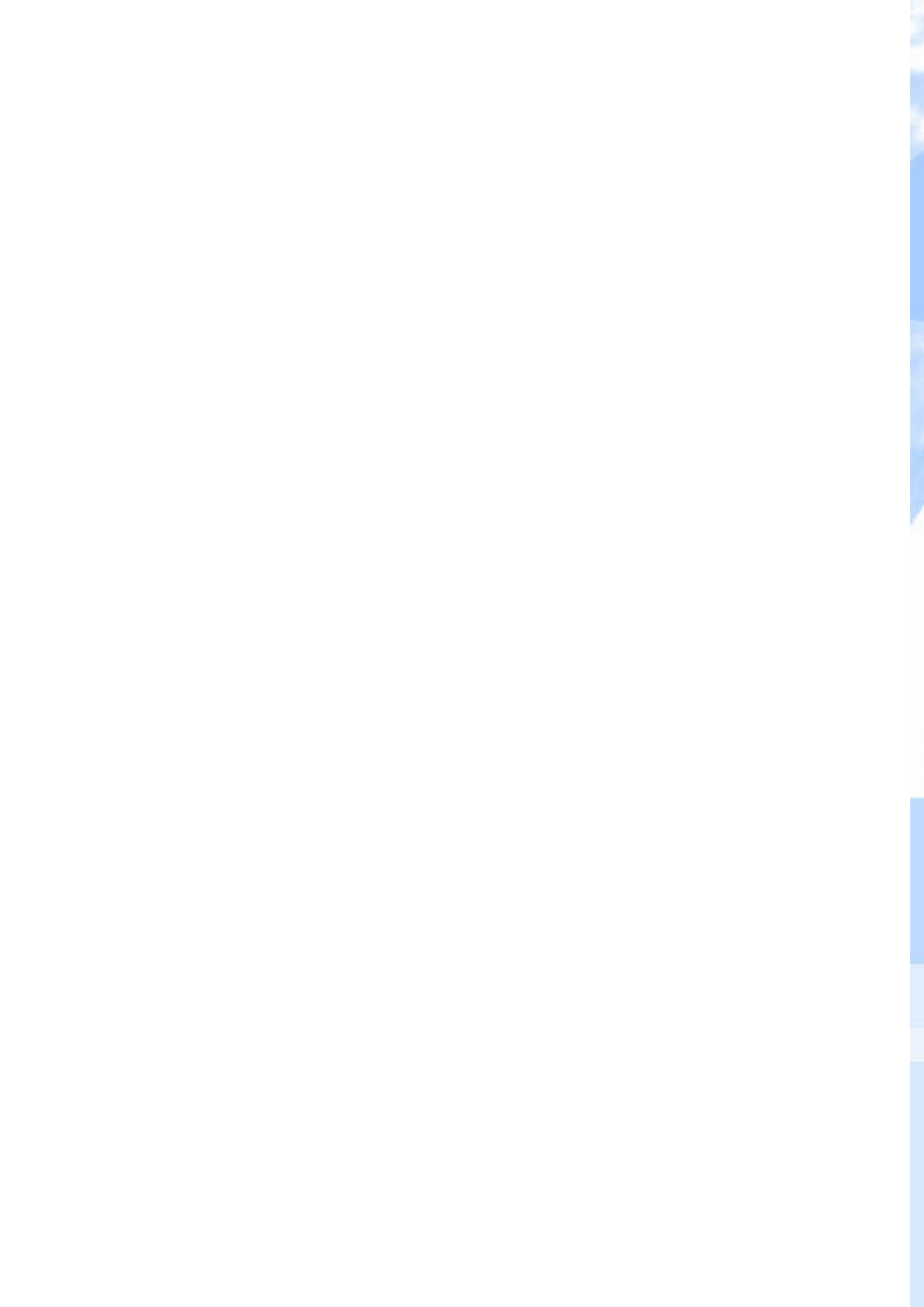
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Australian Capital Territory
EDUCATION AND TRAINING

ABN: 71 666 957 312

Ms Katy Gallagher MLA
Minister for Education and Training
ACT Legislative Assembly
London Circuit
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Minister

This report has been prepared under section 5(1) reference of the *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004* and in accordance with the requirements referred to in the Annual Report Directions. It has been prepared in conformity with other legislation applicable to the preparation of the Annual Report by the Department of Education and Training.

I hereby certify that the attached Annual Report is an honest and accurate account and that all material information on the operations of the Department of Education and Training during the period 1 July 2004 and 30 June 2005 has been included and that it complies with the Chief Minister's Annual Report Directions.

I also hereby certify that fraud prevention has been managed in accordance with Public Sector Management Standard 1, Part 4.

The annual reports of the:

Accreditation and Registration Council
Board of Senior Secondary Studies
Vocational Education and Training Authority
Government School Education Council
Non-government School Education Council

are included in this report.

Section 13 of the *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004* requires that you cause a copy of the report to be presented to the Legislative Assembly within three months after the end of the financial year.

Yours sincerely

Michele Bruniges
Chief Executive

19/9/05

PART A — CHIEF EXECUTIVE REVIEW

A.1 Overview of the agency

The Department of Education and Training works in partnership with the community to provide school education and training services to meet the needs of the people of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT).

Departmental services include the provision of government school education; registration of non-government schools; registration for home education; planning and coordination of vocational education and training; and provision of preschool and early intervention education programs.

Through these services the department aims to improve learning outcomes for students and trainees and fulfil its mission to help individuals participate fully in the economic, social and cultural life of the ACT. The values which guide the actions and the leaders of this department in relation to one another and to our stakeholders are:

- being inclusive
- being open
- acting with integrity
- always doing our best
- working together.

Our clients and stakeholders encompass students, including trainees and apprentices, parents and carers, ACT government schools, ACT non-government schools, school communities, training organisations, industry training advisory bodies, group training companies and community organisations.

The work of the department has continued to be guided by the *Strategic Plan 2003–2005* which outlines the strategic priorities of building a quality education and training system; increasing opportunities for all children and young people; improving outcomes for the most vulnerable; developing our people and strengthening our governance arrangements.

The department's responsibilities require ongoing interaction with other portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Education and Training, particularly the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support. Contact is also maintained with the Office for Women and the Office of Industrial Relations. Interaction also regularly occurs with agencies within other Ministers' portfolios of responsibilities.

A reorganisation of the department's structure took place following the separation of the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support. A new position of Deputy Chief Executive was created late in 2004.

The department has the responsibility to oversee and administer the following legislation:

Board of Senior Secondary Studies Act 1997 — enables the establishment of registration, accreditation, assessment, moderation and certification procedures for senior secondary education in the ACT

Building and Construction Industry Training Levy Act 1999 — enables the imposition of a levy for improving training in the building industry and construction industry

Canberra Institute of Technology Act 1987 — enables the Canberra Institute of Technology to foster the achievement of excellence in the fields of technical and further education

Education Act 2004 — provides for the education of children in the ACT and covers the responsibilities of parents and the government, governance of government schools and registration of non-government schools and home education

Tertiary Accreditation and Registration Act 2003 — enables effective planning, funding, co-ordination and evaluation of vocational education and training

University of Canberra Act 1989 — details the functions, values, principles and powers of the University of Canberra

Vocational Education and Training Act 2003 — establishes an accreditation and registration framework for vocational education and training and higher education.

Education Act 2004

The commencement of the *Education Act 2004* on 1 January 2005 represents a significant legislative reform. The main objects of the new Act are to: state the responsibilities of parents and the government in relation to school education; state the principles and values on which government and non-government school education and home education are based; promote compulsory school education; provide for the operation and governance of government schools; and provide for the registration of non-government schools and home education.

A.2 Major issues, challenges and achievements for the reporting year

A major highlight was the completion of the middle and senior school site of Amaroo School in December 2004. Amaroo School has been designed to provide flexible learning spaces to meet the educational needs of students while nurturing the development of a sense of community. The middle school, comprising years 6 to 8, will support students making the transition from primary to high school. This school demonstrates a significant commitment to the provision of high quality teaching and learning in the ACT and is responsive to the changing nature of society and education in the 21st century.

The Canberra Plan outlines the Government's commitment to lead Australia in education, lifelong learning and training. To achieve this commitment requires a progressive and challenging curriculum. In February 2005, the Minister for Education and Training released the first phase of the new curriculum for ACT schools, *Every Chance to Learn: Curriculum for ACT Schools (P-10), Principles and Framework (Phase 1) 2005*. The new curriculum will ensure that ACT schools continue to provide a relevant, challenging and high quality education for all students now and into the future.

Clarification of the *Education Act 2004* in relation to voluntary financial contributions became a community concern early in 2005. Demonstrating



Amaroo School

a commitment to working with stakeholders, the department convened a working party to develop guidelines for schools on how and for what parents could be approached for financial contributions. Membership of the working party comprised representatives of the Australian Education Union, the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations and principals. The guidelines were completed by May 2005 and issued to schools for immediate implementation.

ACT government schools have a strong focus on reporting student progress and achievement. The ACT Assessment Program (ACTAP) provides a standardised assessment of student achievement against the learning outcomes described in the curriculum profiles for English and Mathematics. Students undertake ACTAP in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 each year. It is a point-in-time assessment that provides important information to parents and carers on student achievement compared to other students in the ACT and nationally. ACT students perform strongly in literacy and numeracy when compared to students in other jurisdictions. A pleasing development has been the improvement in the proportion of Indigenous students at or above the national benchmarks in year 3 literacy.

The Canberra Plan contains a commitment to invest in schools and young people in Canberra. The 2004–05 Budget made a significant investment in improving information and communication technology (ICT) in schools. All ACT Government schools are now connected by TransACT broadband services. Funds were also provided to non-government schools to enable them to have broadband access.

A Schools IT Infrastructure Fund was also established to ensure that information and communications technology in government schools is of a high and consistent quality. It provides government schools with an increased capacity to purchase and upgrade information and communications technology infrastructure and resources.

Other budgetary initiatives supportive of *The Canberra Plan* commitment to education and lifelong learning included the Promoting Healthy Students initiative, which aims to improve the health and fitness of all students across government and non-government schools.

The 2005–06 Budget will increase the provision of preschool education for eligible four year olds from 10.5 hours per week to 12 hours per week. This initiative, together with the provision of additional funding for K-3 students in non-government schools recognised the social and educational benefits to children of early learning experiences.

In June 2005 the ACT signed a new quadrennial funding agreement with the Australian Government under the *Schools Assistance (Learning Together — Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Act 2004*. This agreement details the Australian Government funding that ACT government and non-government schools in the ACT will receive during the 2005 to 2008 Quadrennium.

The ACT has had the honour of hosting both the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) and Australian Education Systems Officials Committee Meetings (AESOC) during 2005. The May 2005 MCEETYA meeting incorporated an Indigenous Education Forum in which Ministers discussed current issues facing Indigenous students and ways to improve educational outcomes for these students.

Like other agencies, the department will be required to make a budget saving in the 2005–06 year. To achieve greater efficiency, and to better align the department's structure with its key deliverables, I have proposed an organisational review to be implemented early in the new financial year. A draft proposal was issued to staff and unions on 30 June 2005 for consultation.

A.3 Overview of agency performance and financial results

The 2004–05 financial year was one of consolidation for the department after the separation of the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support and finalisation of new enterprise bargaining arrangements for teachers and clerical staff. There were significant pressures during the year in relation to the funding of apprenticeships and traineeships, which led the government to appropriate an additional \$3.1m in the 2004–05 second appropriation. The number of students with a disability continued to increase in 2004–05 and costs rose accordingly.

Overall, the department more than achieved its budgeted operating result, with an actual operating deficit of \$18.4m against a budget of \$22.1m. The \$3.7m difference primarily relates to payments for Commonwealth programs which have been received, but where the program has not yet been finalised.

The Records Management Program is being updated to ensure compliance with the *Territory Records Act 2002*.

In response to a comprehensive business risk assessment, the department has developed a new *Fraud and Corruption Prevention Plan*, which includes a comprehensive risk management framework.

The certification of the *Teacher Staff Certified Agreement 2004–2006* and the *Staff Certified Agreement 2004–2007* has reinforced the department's on-going commitment to the development of all employees through professional learning and development and efficient performance management systems.

A.4 Outlook for the coming year

The department will continue to implement the *Curriculum for ACT Schools P–10* in the coming year. With full implementation from 2008 schools will be required to demonstrate how they have embedded the principles and framework in their curriculum through school improvement processes (government schools) and registration (non-government schools).

The year ahead will see the implementation of new reporting requirements for government schools: both to the community on school programs and performance and to parents on student's individual achievement and progress. Schools will develop a policy on the new reporting requirements in consultation with their community.

The department has also been working closely with its major stakeholders in developing a new strategic plan for 2006–09.

In July 2005 the ACT Government announced a proposal to redevelop Ginninderra District High School. During the next six months the proposal will be subject to wide community consultation.

The 2005–06 Budget recognised the importance of vocational education and training (VET) as a key driver in addressing skills shortages. Work on a variety of VET initiatives will continue both at a local and national level during the next year to meet identified skills shortages, trading requirements and to further improve access to VET for all Canberrans.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the leadership of my predecessor Fran Hinton and the work of Tim Keady, Mike Zissler, Craig Curry and Julie McKinnon who led the Department through some challenging moments at various stages during 2004–05. I feel a great sense of pride to have been given the opportunity to lead the ACT Department of Education and Training into a renewed environment of educational change.

The Department of Education and Training comprises thousands of committed staff who, on a daily basis, apply the highest level of professionalism and skill to deliver quality education and training programs. I commend their achievements as recorded in this Report.