

SUPPORTING TEACHERS, BUILDING SCHOOLS AND SETTING STUDENTS UP FOR SUCCESS

INVESTING IN TEACHERS, SCHOOLS AND SUPPORTS

A good education forms the building blocks of a good life. With the right components, it can set you up for success and lead you to fulfil your potential. But there are many components to a good education, components that stem beyond reading, writing and maths.

Central to providing a good education is having an effective, well-supported teaching workforce and ensuring students have the wellbeing supports in place that enable them to learn.

The ACT Greens want Canberra to have a vibrant public education system based on modern, research-based curriculum teaching methods. We want our public schools to be the education provider of choice for all families.

Not only do we want to build the physical infrastructure to provide a good education to every student, but we want to develop the intangible, systematic structures that support teachers to be at their best and allow students to thrive.

THE ACT GREENS WILL:

- ▲ Retain and attract great teachers by reducing administrative burdens
- ▲ Build a new school in Belconnen Town Centre
- ▲ Engage transparently with the community about long term infrastructure planning and upgrades
- ▲ Expand provision of free breakfast and lunch clubs
- ▲ Support and fully deliver the ACT Literacy & Numeracy Review
- ▲ Recruit school wellbeing teams and develop a systematic response to bullying
- ▲ Compassionately address school refusal, also known as 'School Can't'
- ▲ Improve governance and compliance

SUPPORTING TEACHERS AND THE WORKFORCE

REDUCING TEACHER WORKLOAD

The teacher shortage is perhaps one of, if not *the* most pressing issue in education. Both early career and established teachers tell us that their administrative workload risks burnout.

The ACT Greens want to streamline the administrative workload of teachers as much as possible in order to reduce workload and help attract and retain more teachers.

We will fully implement the recommendations from the [Teacher Shortage Taskforce Report](#) as a priority. We will explore all possible avenues to reduce or streamline administrative workload, such as reviewing the administrative duties that could be taken on by school administration and support staff, and reviewing risk assessment procedures and paperwork. What's most important is that we work with the education workforce to understand the pressure points.

WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

- Delivered within existing Directorate resources.

SUPPORTING CENTRALISED RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Teaching requires enormous creativity, energy and talent – but we hear consistently from teachers that the

workload is too great. We can still achieve good student learning outcomes, and better support teachers by centralising development of curriculum resources and assessment tools.

The ACT Greens will engage the Education Directorate's Education Support Office to develop a bank of high-quality curriculum resources such as planning documentation, programs, assessment tools, textbooks and digital learning resources, to be made available to all schools and all years.

WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

- Delivered within existing Directorate resources.

BUILDING SCHOOLS

TRANSPARENCY IN LONG-TERM EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

Schools are central to our communities. They are not only a place for little minds to grow and flourish, but they are hubs in our neighbourhoods - bringing people together and creating social connections.

As such, the ACT Greens understand the importance of involving the community as we plan for the future of our schools and manage upgrades at existing schools.

In order to meet the needs of our growing population, we need a long-term plan for the construction of new schools. We also need a plan for significant

infrastructure upgrades as our existing schools start to age.

We know that we must involve the community in this planning and, as such, we will fully release the demographic projections that are presently guiding government planning. We will also ensure good community consultation and transparency is prioritised in all long term planning.

A SCHOOL FOR BELCONNEN TOWN CENTRE

We know that the Belconnen Town Centre is set to grow by more than 3,000 new homes over the next decade.

The ACT Greens will begin immediate planning and subsequent construction of a new school in Belconnen Town Centre.

The new school will provide certainty for families looking to move into this growing, thriving suburb.

Belconnen Town Centre and the neighbouring University of Canberra residential development will eventually have more than 11,500 homes, which is more than Goulburn, which has nine primary schools and two high schools in its township.

With a rapidly growing town centre in Belconnen it is essential that we identify a site for this needed school as soon as possible.

WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

- Roughly \$106m for land acquisition and build.

URGENT INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES

The ACT Greens want our school campuses to be inspiring places of learning and teaching. Many are, but we need to ensure all campuses have fit for purpose facilities. We can't have poor facilities get in the way of getting a good education.

The ACT Greens will commence an immediate and full audit of ACT public schools to ensure basic maintenance and acceptable standards of essential infrastructure.

We will prioritise upgrades on below standard facilities, including classrooms, toilets, staff rooms and outdoor recreation areas and give urgent attention to heating and cooling.

And we will advocate to the Federal Government for infrastructure funding that is distinct from the school resource standard.

WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

- \$150m for school upgrades.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS AND IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

BUILDING EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

Good literacy and numeracy skills set the foundations for success in your education career and beyond.

This term, the ACT Greens have advocated for the Independent Review into Literacy and Numeracy in order to inform improvements to literacy and numeracy in ACT Public Schools.

We want to ensure its recommendations are implemented in full, with an accelerated timetable for the implementation of ACT Government's [Strong Foundations](#) program, including immediate implementation of phonics checks and tutoring to ensure no student is left behind.

WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

\$86.8m to fully fund the Literacy and Numeracy Review recommendations and embed an educational expert to deliver on the recommendations.

FREE BREAKFAST AND LUNCH CLUBS

Kids have hungry minds, but they also need full bellies to be able to learn properly at school.

The ACT Greens will expand the provision of free breakfast and lunch clubs to at least 20 of the most in need schools three days a week. All ACT public school students will get access to free fruit at least twice weekly, from the start of Term 2 2025.

Longer term, schools and the surrounding community will also be encouraged to grow their own fruit, extending provision beyond two days per

week in season. This links with the ACT Greens [Food for All](#) initiative.

WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

- \$29.2m over four years for free breakfasts and lunches in 20 ACT public schools
- \$8.8m over four years for the provision of seasonal fruit to all 55,000 ACT public school students twice weekly.

WELLBEING TEAMS AT ALL ACT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Student wellbeing is central to their ability to learn and reach their full potential.

The ACT Greens will further invest in our capability to support the emotional and mental wellbeing of our students by establishing embedded wellbeing teams in schools.

Wellbeing teams will be developed on a school by school basis, on an evidenced needs basis. They would comprise of youth workers and allied health workers such as social workers, occupational therapists and psychologists.

Wellbeing teams will be embedded within specific schools, to build consistent relationships with the students, and target the specific needs of their school.

We will prioritise integrating existing educational psychologists with wellbeing teams to ensure they are connected not just with other staff at their school, but

the broader network of wellbeing teams throughout Canberra.

We will also provide additional professional learning to support student wellbeing teams.

WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

- \$20m over four years.

ADDRESSING BULLYING IN SCHOOLS

A student's relationship with education can be destroyed by experiencing bullying. Bullying is a complex and varied problem, but there are systems and supports that we can put in place to help schools respond to and address bullying.

The ACT Greens will ensure data on bullying is collected and analysed centrally to identify trends. We will engage the Education Directorate to develop a standardised approach to behaviour management that can be rolled out consistently to all schools.

We will provide additional support to teachers and principals alongside the Safe and Supportive Schools Policy with strategies for addressing bullying, and clear indications of how the Education Directorate can support students who experience bullying.

We will also ensure better training is provided on bystander education, also known as 'upstanding' and review the Positive Behaviours for Learning framework to evaluate whether it meets its intended purpose.

WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

- Delivered within existing Directorate resources.

MEANINGFUL ACTION ON RACISM

Despite being a progressive and multicultural city, discrimination remains an issue, with some students still experiencing racism across the ACT school system.

The 'It Really Stabs Me' report published by the Children and Young People Commissioner, Curijo and Multicultural Hub, found an ongoing issue with racism, despite current anti-racism programs.

The ACT Greens will review the efficacy of existing anti-racism programs in ways most relevant to the context of the ACT, and actively engage young people in the conversation when doing so.

We also will commit to better bystander education, to ensure that all Canberra students can be proactive in stopping the discrimination and bullying they may encounter, even if it isn't directed towards them.

WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

- Delivered within existing Directorate resources.

COMPASSIONATELY ADDRESS SCHOOL CAN'T

Some children struggle or cannot bring themselves to go to school, which is an increasing issue impacting students around the ACT – and has become known as 'School Can't'.

As a community we need to better understand this issue and support students, families and schools in addressing it compassionately.

The ACT Greens will centralise the gathering of data on School Can't in consultation with relevant stakeholders to ensure data is gathered by schools in a respectful and constructive manner.

We will legislate to make School Can't an accepted reason for students to be absent from school, alongside the current list of accepted reasons for school absence.

We will engage the Education Directorate to work with School Can't stakeholders to co-design a central resource for teachers to better understand the experience of School Can't, and provide strategies for working with students and families experiencing School Can't.

We will also establish a mentoring program for students and former students experiencing School Can't, which facilitates strong, respectful relationships between students and school staff.

WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

- Delivered within existing Directorate resources.

REDUCE BARRIERS FACED BY YOUNG CARERS

Whilst schools do collect data on young carers, there is a need for early identification through school enrolment

forms. Awareness of a young carer's situation enables the school to make appropriate accommodations, including personalised plans which may include options for flexible learning and solutions for possible issues arising from absences. Aware schools are also better able to connect young carers to educational and mental health supports.

The ACT Greens will require schools to identify young carers and develop personalised plans to support their education and reduce barriers.

We will also require the Education Directorate to implement a centralised mentoring program to connect young carers to additional education support, career support and mental health support.

WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

- Delivered within existing Directorate resources.

IMPROVING GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE

UNDERTAKE REVIEW OF UC GOVERNANCE

Canberrans rightly expect transparency when it comes to the operations of Educational institutions. Recent actions by the University of Canberra have raised significant concerns on matters of governance.

The ACT Greens support a review into the circumstances surrounding the sudden dismissal of the Vice Chancellor, his unusually high remuneration, the decision to cut a significant number of courses and units at the University and significant budget deficit.

The University of Canberra has an important part to play in Canberra, and we must ensure it is an institution we can all trust to prioritise the education of its students.

WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

- \$250,000

ENSURE COMPLIANCE AT BRINDABELLA CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

Numerous concerns have been raised regarding the conduct of Brindabella Christian College, including the construction of an illegal car park at its main Lyneham campus, failure to submit on time annual returns to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission and reports of unpaid superannuation to staff.

The school is currently subject to regulatory action by the Minister for Education. Recognising this, the ACT Greens will also seek to establish a cross-Directorate Taskforce to address issues that arise beyond the narrower issues of School Registration. This will be designed to ensure the College is suitably addressing welfare of students and staff, but also their role as a neighbour, and their compliance with a range of traffic and planning conditions.

WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

- Delivered within existing Directorate resources.