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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As first term draws to a close we are less than a week away from the COAG meeting at which State and Territory governments will decide whether government schools in Australia will move to a new funding model. The last few months have seen intense confidential negotiations between the Federal Government, [ISCA](#) (the Independent Schools Council of Australia) and the [NCEC](#) (National Catholic Education Commission) on the proposed funding model and what this model would look like for Independent and Catholic Schools.

Negotiations continue but time is running out. Yet the funding model has not been made public. The current reform agenda has been 18 months in the making, and is looking to deliver \$6.8 billion extra funding to Australian schools with a new base level of funding allocated for each student, topped up by additional 'loadings' based on the term disadvantage.

APFACTS has been urging that the funding model is transparent to all non-government parents. After all, we are an important stakeholder. Annually \$8.6 billion is contributed by Australian non-government parents – this is after tax dollars!

APFACTS will be watching closely and advocating strongly on behalf of non-government school parents to have the funding model made public within a fortnight. Schools need to understand how changes in funding translate to the delivery of education in their schools and parents need to be told what the new model means for their schools, students and fees.

On a local level, we have had a busy few months with school visits and meetings with Federal and ACT politicians and stakeholders. One of the universal endorsements from everyone we have met is the need for increased awareness about 'parental engagement' and its role and importance in today's education environment. APFACTS advocates that parental engagement is part of the core business of schools and also increases educational outcomes for students. Next term we hope to have some news to share with you about our ACT pilot project into Parental engagement.

In June, APFACTS will be launching a week-long program of workshops for students, teachers and parents, presented by much sought after cyber-bullying and student leadership specialists, [PROJECT ROCKIT](#). We urge you to save the dates **June 17-21** in your diaries now. Tickets for APFACTS member schools, P&fs and School councils are free and we anticipate tickets will go very fast. For more information, visit our [APFACTS website](#) or contact us at the beginning of Term 2.

Thank you to those who responded to our social media questionnaire – great feedback from parents that education news is desired through social media channels. APFACTS encourages you to join us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on Twitter (@Apfacts1 for regular news, views and education topics. Thanks to those who have already joined, glad to hear you are enjoying our posts.

As always we enjoy hearing your comments and feedback on issues and concerns, and your continued involvement in the work of APFACTS is appreciated and welcomed.

Hope you have an enjoyable holiday break.

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President's Message

Welcome to the APFACTS Term 1, 2013 newsletter.

We encourage you to be part of the conversation around education issues, join us on:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- Visit our [website](#)

Executive Committee members

[Charuni Weerasooriya](#)
President

SCHOOL FUNDING UPDATE

Few would disagree that the school funding review (the Gonski review) which commenced in 2010, with its [final report](#) released in February 2012, brought with it a much needed national conversation and focus on school education.

We all optimistically hoped that the Gonski recommendations would finally see the politics of 'envy and division' replaced with quality measures, equity and a neutral, fair funding model implemented for all students in Australia.

Very early, the number crunchers were at work, but the very long consultation period was no disguise for the fact that developing a new funding model after 30 years was going to be tough. Providing education reform that lifted Australian educational attainment alongside a funding model that addressed equity, with an overarching promise of no major losses for school sectors, is a very difficult task indeed.

The current school funding scheme expires at the end of the 2013. The promise of an injection of an extra \$6.8 billion in Commonwealth and State money would see some of the Gonski reforms deliver a base level of funding allocated for each student, topped up by additional 'loadings' based on disadvantage.

Following the Gonski review, was an extended and extensive consultation process with stakeholders, parents, teachers, principals and school sectors. Next, the promise of 'no school will lose a dollar', then, important dialogue and developments in improvement to teacher quality and school improvement followed. All of this work was developed into a [national plan for school improvement](#) and an [Australian Education Bill](#) which still awaits a funding model to be annexed.

The last few months have seen intense and confidential negotiations take place between ISCA (the Independent Schools Council of Australia) and the NCEC (National Catholic Education Commission) on funding non-government schools. Why these groups? Answer: a third of Australia's school students are educated in the non-government sector, and that proportion increases the higher the year level, with two out of every five year 12 students in the country attending a non-government school. While most media reports state that a 'deal' has been done, both organisations have not stated publicly that this is the case.

On April 19, the Federal government will continue negotiations with COAG members from the States and Territories. The success of these negotiations will decide the fate of government school funding and the education reforms.

On Monday of this week it was reported that the Commonwealth shared confidentially with the States and Territory governments the new and improved plan for school improvement and the funding model for discussion at the COAG meeting. A few of the bigger States were not keen to sign the landmark funding deal as they view it disadvantages all sectors (Government, Catholic and Independent) schools in their State. We will wait and see what next week holds and how our ACT Government represents all ACT people and stakeholders in education and stands by their promise that they will not agree to a model that disadvantages schools and school communities in the ACT.

One thing is clear – the funding model must be released to individual schools and school systems so they are able to work out the impacts to their schools and then released to the public following COAG meetings, so non-government parents can see how the new funding model will impact on their schools, students and fees.

One final hurdle awaits - a Federal election date of 14 September means the Government has only until 27 June, 2013 to pass legislation, including legislation to cover the Commonwealth funding of schools beyond 2013.

Michael Healy

Vice-President

Peter Murray

Treasurer

Kirsten Wilkinson

Secretary

Do you know of an event or resource that non-government schools should know about?

Email us at:

admin@apfacts.org.au

Are you a member and would like to let other parents know about an important event or something happening at your school?

Email us at:

events@apfacts.org.au

APFACTS will keep member school communities informed of progress. It is important that, as co-investors in education (nationally non-government parents contribute \$8.6 billion to education), we are told the impacts of the new funding model and its effects on students, school communities and any increases in fees.

“We have had numerous assurances in the last month from both Federal and ACT Labor that they are acutely aware of the ACT’s unique position and will be making sure that any new funding model doesn’t disadvantage any school in the ACT ”

“Our ACT education landscape is like no other in Australia. We have over 43% of students in the ACT attending non-government schools, this is 11% higher than any other State or Territory. Our ACT Government needs to represent the ACT parent community and take a position that stands for all parents in the ACT.” said Charuni Weerasooriya, APFACTS President.

Join us on [Facebook](#) and stay in touch with APFACTS news, view and education posts

APFACTS ACT BUDGET SUBMISSION AND ELECTION PLEDGES UPDATE

In February, APFACTS submitted its budget consultation paper to ACT Treasurer, Andrew Barr, MLA. Read more on [APFACTS Budget submission 2013/2014](#).

Following the ACT election, APFACTS has been seeking [clarity and details on the education pledges](#) promised to the non-government education sector by Canberra Labor when elected in October 2012.

In ongoing correspondence and recent meetings and with ACT Education Minister, Ms Joy Burch MLA, APFACTS has been informed that many of the ACT election pledges are waiting the budget process and some pledges awaiting clarification of the Federal education reforms.

APFACTS believes it is the intention of the ACT Government to follow through with a needs-based funding model for schooling in the ACT.

CURRICULUM UPDATE

Implementation of the Australian Curriculum in phase one subjects is underway in ACT schools with all K-10 schools delivering English, Mathematics, Science and History. Under the ACT Australian Curriculum Implementation Plan, all schools will be reporting using the Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards in 2013.

The phase two subjects: Geography, the Arts and Languages, will be implemented in ACT schools from 2014 and reported using the Achievement Standards in 2016. Advice on Phase 3 learning areas will be provided as an additional supplement as release dates are determined by ACARA.

Interested in how the ACT is implementing the National Curriculum in ACT schools?

- [FAQ on ACT implementation of National Curriculum](#)

Have your say!

- Health and Physical Education – closes April 2013. [More ...](#)
- The draft F-10 Australian Curriculum: Languages for Chinese and Italian – closes April 2013. [More ...](#)
- Technologies Foundation to year 10 – closes May 2013. [More ...](#)

Useful resources

- [APFACTS – curriculum](#)
- Australian Curriculum and Assessment and Reporting Authority- [ACARA](#)
- Check out portfolios containing [annotated student work](#) that

illustrates satisfactory, above satisfactory and below satisfactory achievement in year level and learning areas

- New rich resource developed to assist teachers for English in the new curriculum with Maths, Science and History in the development.

[A great tool for parents](#)

APFACTS is a strong advocate for parents on many curriculum forums in the ACT. We represent parents on:

- BSSS – Board of Secondary Studies
- CAC – Curriculum Advisory Council
- ACT Curriculum Taskforce.

If you have any areas regarding curriculum you would like us to discuss, please [email](#) us.

NDIS (NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME) UPDATE

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) will be initially rolled out in the Hunter in NSW, the Barwon area of Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and the ACT.

The [COAG agreement](#) signed by ACT Chief Minister Katy Gallagher and Prime Minister Julia Gillard in December 2012 outlines the ACT and Federal obligations and objectives for NDIS implementation in the ACT in 2014.

[Read more](#) on the NDIS in the ACT.

APFACTS PROJECT ROCKIT WORKSHOPS - JUNE 17-21, 2013

APFACTS is excited to be presenting a week-long program of workshops for students, teachers and parents in June.

The sessions are presented by sought-after cyber-bullying and student leadership specialists, [PROJECT ROCKIT](#) who has delivered programs to over 35,000 young people. Their interactive anti-bullying and youth leadership program is run by young people for young people.

"We are thrilled that PROJECT ROCKIT has agreed to visit Canberra and hold a week-long series of workshops for APFACTS! It will be one of the first times in the ACT that an issue will be canvassed in such a big way with primary and secondary students, teachers and parents all looking at ways to work together and show leadership in bullying and cyber bullying in the ACT" said Charuni Weerasooriya, APFACTS President.

We urge you to pencil the dates 17-21 June into your diaries now. To find out more information, visit our [APFACTS website](#) or contact us at the **beginning of Term 2**.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Catholic Schools Week 2013 was celebrated March 10-16. Read more on the [Canberra Catholic Schools Centenary Celebration Mass](#).

PARENT BRIEFING - STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY

APFACTS delegates and ACT non-government parents attended a parent briefing on students with disability by Karen Hickmott on 27 February, 2013. Karen Hickmott is the co-chair of the Disability Taskforce for the Australian Parents Council and Executive member of the NSW Parents Council.

The session was very useful in gaining a better understanding of the disability agenda and where the definition, data collection and reform areas were currently up to and heading.

APFACTS sincerely thanks Karen Hickmott for her time and informative presentation.

Do you have a child with a disability attending a non-government school in the ACT?

- Interested in joining a group that discusses disability funding and support for parents of children with a disability in non-government schools? [Email](#)
- Are you a parent from a member P&F or school council interested in attending education briefings? Email Executiveofficer@apfacts.org.au and we will email you about our next parent briefing.

PARENT RESOURCES

- Check out the new digital learning resource : [ABC Splash](#)
- New [Safe Schools Hub](#) website
- [New app for primary school piano enthusiasts](#)
- [Beyond Gonski: Reviewing the evidence on Quality Schooling](#) - report by Scott Prasser and Helen Tracey
- [Report card: The wellbeing of young Australians 2013](#) - report by ARACY
- ['Parents key to school success'](#) - Courier Mail

STAY IN TOUCH WITH EDUCATION ISSUES

Interested in education issues and want to know more?

- Join us on [Facebook](#)
- Follow us on Twitter – [@apfacts1](#)
- Visit the [APFACTS website](#) and have your say on education issues.
- Learn more about APFACTS work - visit www.apfacts.org.au

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