

Issue No. 10

24/06/14

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

The Commission of Audit, Federal and ACT Budgets were handed down in Term 2 and contained some worrying signs for parents of students in non-government schools.

The Commission of audit recommended that funding for non-government schools be moved to State and Territory governments. Many in the education arena felt that State and Territory Ministers who already manage public education would be conflicted and this posed a risk to non-government school funding without legally enforceable agreements in place. Minister Pyne was quick to respond to this in his address at the [Christian Schools Conference](#) stating that the Federal Government would not be implementing this recommendation.

A commentary of the Federal and ACT Budget is contained in this newsletter – of ongoing concern will be funding issues past 2018 and education costs outstripping indexation (based now on CPI).

APFACTS took the lead in raising awareness and advocacy regarding the changes to school bus routes this term. Our ongoing media and representation led to Minister Rattenbury's office implementing longer lead times to bus route changes from 2 weeks to 4. While this is a good win by APFACTS for school parents, with 3 weeks holiday period (for some schools) a watchful eye on ACTION website is recommended so you are aware of changes that affect your child's travel.

Beginning next term we will start to take bookings for [APFACTS Cyber Savvy](#) parent workshops which take place from September 15-19 alongside our secondary school student workshops. With such great speakers, I urge you to book a ticket for one of the 3 parent workshops quickly.

We are also really excited to be having our Open Forum, bringing together school, business and government communities to discuss technology skills for students in the ACT. It is an important conversation - how do we as a Canberra community empower, equip and protect our students? We invite you to be part of the Open Forum as we explore ideas to collaborate and expand the horizons of our ACT students in their digital future.

Charuni Weerasooriya, President

2014 FEDERAL BUDGET

The Federal Budget was handed down on Tuesday 13th May 2014 with a number of changes that will impact on education.

Current school funding arrangements under the Students First plan will continue and the Government will provide an additional \$54.1 million in 2017-18 to maintain real Commonwealth school funding beyond the 2017 school year. From the 2018 school year onwards, total school funding will be indexed by the Consumer Price Index, with an allowance for changes in enrolments.

Other notable features of the budget include:

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President's Message

Welcome to the APFACTS Term 2, 2014 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

[Eisabeth Findlay](#)
Vice-President (Canberra)

[Paul Crowley](#)
Vice-President (Fraser)

[Peter Murray](#)

- \$243.8 million over four years for the National School Chaplaincy Programme.
- \$10.0 million over four years to improve the protection of children online.
- \$11.6 million to improve the uptake of languages other than English.
- \$5 million over 4 years to help ensure more students study science, technology, engineering and mathematics in primary and secondary schools through the Primary Connections: Linking science with literacy and Science by Doing education programmes.
- \$6.8 in 2014-25 to assist non-government schools who have large numbers of indigenous boarders from remote areas to deliver improved services and provide effective additional support to boost school attendance and engagement.

APFACTS is concerned about the following impacts of the budget:

- Uncertainty post 2017 once again on how schools will be funded which could lead to increased school fees for parents in the non-government sector
- Indexation based on CPI would see a negative impact on funding given education costs are much higher than CPI. This impact would be felt on school budgets.
- No capital funding for schools even though it is forecasted that school enrolments will rise.
- No funding for IT infrastructure in schools even though students need to have digital skills for the future – will this cost once again be carried by parents?
- Still no clear funding arrangements for students with disabilities
- No detailed funding commentary on how Parental engagement will be implemented by the Government despite stating it as a pillar of its education changes.

More information:

- APFACTS Budget Summary E-Bulletin: May 14, 2014: [Budget Summary](#)
- APFACTS Comments in the Canberra Times: May 23, 2014: [School bus services reduced](#)
- 2014 [Federal budget](#)

2014 ACT BUDGET

The ACT Budget 2014-2015 was handed down on Tuesday, 3rd June 2014 by the ACT Treasurer Andrew Barr. There were no significant changes or new initiatives to the Education budget for the non-government sector.

Funding

The ACT government is forecasting in the 2014-2015 Budget that they will contribute \$59.1 million dollars towards the costs of educating children in the non-government sector. This amount includes \$3.9 million for students with disabilities, as well as the \$1.2 million for preschools and \$625,000 for ICT Infrastructure which were allocated over a 4 year period in the 2013-2014 Budget.

In the 2013-2014 ACT Budget, the government provided \$55.8 million for the non-government sector. The increase to \$59.1 million is based on the number of enrolments in a school and the 3% indexation which had previously been negotiated in the funding agreement. The 3% indexation will be in place until 2017 at which time the Federal Government has indicated that the indexation will be CPI of 2.5%.

More information:

- [Education](#)
- [Interactive map on budget initiatives, select your region](#)

Treasurer

[Caitlyn Blackford](#)
Secretary

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- [Andrew Barr's budget summary](#)
- [Jeremy Hanson's budget comments](#)
- [Budget at a glance](#)
- [ABC News budget summary](#)

ACTION BUSES SCHOOL SERVICES

At the beginning of Term 2, APFACTS learnt that ACTION Buses planned to announce a new school bus schedule that would see a reduction in services from 300 to 240 to schools in the ACT from the start of Term 3, 2014.

APFACTS has been working with ACTION Buses, Territory Minister Shane Rattenbury and raising awareness about the issue through Canberra media: ABC666, WIN TV and the Canberra Times. APFACTS has stressed the point parents need as much notice as possible of what these changes will be, so that they are well informed prior to the start of Term 3.

"Our members were concerned that there would not be enough time for parents to be able to trial new routes or source an alternative method of getting to and from school with the initial 2 weeks notification" said Julie Sengelman, APFACTS Executive Officer.

APFACTS believes that there needs to be greater transparency and consultation on changes to school bus services and greater consideration of the impacts of these changes on the school community in the ACT.

"Schools and families need to be included in the consultation process when reviewing school bus services in the same way that community consultation was sought in the establishment of Network 14," said Julie Sengelman.

Following our efforts throughout the term, ACTION announced that they will delay the implementation date which was to commence day 1 Term 3. While ACTION has not yet provided an implementation date, they have made a commitment that they will give four school weeks' notice before implementing the changes. This means there will be four school weeks between the date they release the information and the date that the new services will start.

APFACTS has been told that if ACTION is ready to release the information during the school holidays, they will do so; however, in this case, the services will not commence until four weeks into the school term. This will ensure that parents and students will have adequate time to assess what the new bus routes will mean for them.

We encourage parents to check the ACTION website throughout the holidays as we await this new information.

Recent APFACTS news and coverage:

- APFACTS Press Release: May 23, 2014: [Proposed changes to school bus services](#)
- APFACTS Comments in the Canberra Times: May 23, 2014: [School bus services reduced](#)

NAPLAN UPDATE

NAPLAN tests have concluded for 2014. This year was the seventh year that Australian children have sat the tests. For students in Year 9, this was their final year of NAPLAN testing, as they came full circle from being the first students to sit the tests as Year 3 students in 2008.

ACARA

[Click here](#) to read an opinion piece – 'NAPLAN: something for everyone' – by

Peter Adams, ACARA's Manager, Assessment and Reporting.

Effectiveness of NAPLAN: Final Report

The Senate Education and References Committee has tabled the final report from its Inquiry into the effectiveness of the NAPLAN Program, after an interim report was tabled in June 2013.

The final report makes four recommendations:

- that the quick turnaround of test results should receive the highest priority in the design of NAPLAN Online with achievable and measurable targets built in to the system;
- that when designing adaptive testing for NAPLAN Online the needs of students with disability are taken into account;
- that when designing adaptive testing for NAPLAN Online the needs of students from a non-English speaking background are taken into account; and
- that ACARA closely monitor the use of NAPLAN results to ensure results are published to assist the Government to deliver extra, targeted funding to schools and students who need more support, rather than the development of league tables.

Commenting on the impacts of the My Schools Website, and the publication of league tables, the Committee stated that NAPLAN is not a 'high stakes test', as students are not denied advancement in the school system as a result of their performance.

However, the Committee did note that 'if substantial resources are allocated to schools on the basis of NAPLAN results, then schools understandably deem them to be of significant importance.' Similarly, when the results are used to construct league tables, 'the effect on schools and parents becomes significant.'

Nevertheless, the Committee emphasised that NAPLAN must be recognised as 'one test on one day', providing only a 'snapshot' of individual performance.

APFACTS

We have also created a NAPLAN page on our website with information and links to great resources for parents: [Keeping NAPLAN in Perspective](#)

More info on [parent/carer support](#)

Recent APFACTS news and coverage:

- APFACTS Press Release: March 7, 2014: [Student performance is so much more than league tables](#)
- APFACTS comments in the Canberra Times: March 10, 2014: [Naplan guides will help parents understand MYSCHOOL Data](#)
- APFACTS Comments in the Canberra Times: March 28, 2014: [Senate call to stop league tables](#)

The ACT Budget 2014-2015 was handed down on Tuesday, 3rd June 2014 by the ACT Treasurer Andrew Barr. There were no significant changes or new initiatives to the Education budget for the non-government sector.

COMMISSION OF AUDIT: RECOMMENDATION FOR SCHOOLS FUNDING

The Commission of Audit established by the Abbott government to review and report on the performance, functions and roles of the Commonwealth Government released its report on 1 May 2014.

The Australian Parents Council (APC) has stated that 'the non-government schooling sector will be concerned with the recommendation on schools funding if its implementation is pursued by the government.'

The recommendation on schools funding is as follows:

- While the Commonwealth Government does not have specific constitutional responsibility for school education, it provides significant funding to the States.
- The Commission recommends changing funding arrangements to simplify Commonwealth-State responsibilities and make school funding more affordable by:
 - transferring all policy funding responsibility for government and non-government schools to the States, with annual funding provided in three separate non-transferable pools – one each for government schools, Catholic systemic schools and Independent schools;
- applying requirements on the States to:
 - publish how they allocate funds to schools;
 - participate in national and international testing; and
 - publish student outcomes on a consistent basis;
- basing Commonwealth funding from 2018 onwards on 2017 levels, with:
 - a 2017 per student funding amount calculated for the government and non-government school sectors in each State and Territory;
 - annual funding for each sector in each jurisdiction calculated as the per-student amount, adjusted for the number of students enrolled in that year and indexed by a weighted average of the CPI and the relevant Wage Price Index; and
- significantly reducing the size of the Commonwealth Department of Education.

Both the APC and the Independent Schools Council of Australia agree that the Commonwealth government must continue to fund schooling directly.

ACT PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT PILOT PROJECT

As mentioned in our previous newsletter, ACT Education Minister Joy Burch has acted on a proposal from APFACTS to conduct a research project on parental engagement.

The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth ([ARACY](#)) has been engaged to establish: a definition of parent engagement in the ACT, a measurement tool to look at levels of engagement and best practice and establish a benchmarking tool across the ACT.

The consultation process has started and APFACTS is working with ARACY as a stakeholder in the establishment of this important project.

There will be opportunities for parents to contribute to the research and we encourage you to respond to upcoming requests for feedback via newsletters, emails and social media over the coming months.

If you are interested in becoming more involved with this project or the work of APFACTS in Parent engagement, please enquire further to ;
Executiveofficer@apfacts.org.au

2014 REVIEW OF NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK

A Review of the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care Services is being undertaken by the Australian Government and all states and territories in 2014 to ensure the goal of improving quality in education and care services is being met in the most efficient and effective way. The Review will identify what is working well, areas for improvement and any unintended consequences that result from implementation of the National Quality Framework.

Public consultation sessions

As part of the 2014 Review, public consultation sessions will be held in each state and territory from Monday 26 May 2014 until 20 June 2014.

Woolcott Research Pty Ltd is facilitating the public consultation process on behalf of the Australian and all state and territory governments.

The two hour sessions will include opportunities to discuss and provide feedback about the National Quality Framework, and representatives from the Australian and state and territory governments will also be presenting and available to answer questions.

Comments and Submissions

The online consultation and submission process is open until 30 June 2014.

To register to attend one of the consultation sessions, view the consultation paper, make a formal submission or provide a comment, go to the [Woolcott review](#).

CYBER SAVVY WEEK 2014

APFACTS is excited to be hosting a week-long program on the importance of digital citizenship workshops for students and parents from 15 – 19 September 2014.

APFACTS will once again be running a secondary student workshops presented by co-founders of leading anti-bullying, cyber bullying and leadership organisation PROJECT ROCKIT.

In addition, there will be parent workshops run by speakers such as Nina Funnell, Martine Oglethorpe, and the AFP.

To conclude the week, we will also be hosting a forum with an expert panel.

To find out more, visit the [APFACTS](#) website.

PARENT RESOURCES

Have you joined our online parent community? In case you missed some of our most popular posts on Facebook or twitter:

Parent engagement in learning:

- [Families: An Essential ingredient for Student Success and Excellent Schools](#)
- [Parental engagement in learning improves children's achievements](#) - including comments from APFACTS President, Charuni Weerasooriya
- [Building a relationship with your child's school](#)

Well-being:

- [A parent's guide to anxiety and depression in young people](#)
- [A fantastic online resource for parents on nurturing resilience](#), managing stress and failure, responding to trauma and tragedy, and developing the grit and growth mindset so that children can thrive!

Cyber-safety and Digital Citizenship:

- [Students are the New Digital Influencers](#)
- [Be a good digital citizen: tips for teens and parents](#)
- [This vibrant infographic details how using the Internet can improve children's cognitive abilities, increase interest in reading, improve writing ability and strengthen social skills](#)

Recent reports:

- [Interesting findings from OECD research](#)

EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

NDIS Focus Group

- The ACT Government is inviting Canberrans to participate in Focus Groups for early intervention programs. The information gathered from these groups will be used to assist future providers to meet the needs of the community under the NDIS.
- Sessions are being organised for Monday 30 June, Tuesday 1 July and Monday 7 July.
- If you have not already participated and would like to participate, please email disabilityeducation@act.gov.au to express your interest.

Cyber Savvy Week Parent Workshop – Monday 15 September 2014

- Featuring ThinkUKnow – a partnership between the Australian Federal Police, Microsoft Australia and Datacom.
- Time: 6:30 – 8:00pm

Cyber Savvy Week Parent Workshop – Tuesday 16 September 2014

- Featuring Nina Funnell – journalist and author
- Time: 6:30 – 8:00pm
- Venue: Daramalan College

Cyber Savvy Week Parent Workshop – Wednesday 17 September 2014

- Featuring Martine Oglethorpe – author of The Modern Parent blog.
- Time: 6:30 – 8:00pm
- Venue: Radford College

Cyber Savvy Week Forum – Thursday 18 September 2014

- Featuring guest speakers including: Joy Burch MLA, Chris Faulks, Matthew Purcell,
- Time: 6:30 – 8:00pm
- Venue: Hedley Beare Centre, Stirling, ACT

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