

Issue No. 4

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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

As another year draws to a close and we wind down from school routines, pack away school uniforms and reflect on our children's year, I hope that it has been a good year for your children and your families.

It has been an extraordinarily busy representation year for APFACTS with the raft of developments and agendas in the education sector locally and nationally in 2012.

While we are no further enlightened on what school funding post 2014 will be for the non-government sector, the Federal Government last week released legislation - [The Australian Education Bill 2012](#) which can at best be described as aspirational.

The funding is still to be worked out so the details about dollars, the timetable, indexation, funding mechanisms and loadings for the non-government sector are still undecided. Frustrating as this is for parents who, as co-investors in their children's education, need also to plan ahead and balance budgets, it seems as though it will be a while before we will have the details needed for this. It is proposed by the Government that further negotiation with State and Territory governments and the non government sector be finalized in early 2013 and the Bill be updated to reflect the details of these agreements. If passed, the Bill will come into effect on 1 January 2014, with a transition period to give schools and systems time to adjust. Our comments post education bill introduction ... [More](#)

The ACT election provided a myriad of education pledges and promises by all political parties. APFACTS advocated that political parties truly recognize the ACT education landscape and provide inclusive governance for all students in the ACT. With over 43% of students in the ACT attending a non-government school, funding, policies, practice and structures for ACT education need to reflect our population, its demography and our choice of schooling. We also received very positive feedback and interest from all parties on "parental engagement" strategies for the ACT. APFACTS advocates that parental engagement used as a policy lever can increase and enhance partnership between home and school and assist with educational outcomes for students. Towards the National Plan for School Improvement, parent engagement is the glue that will make all the difference. We look forward to increased dialogue and bringing some of our aspirations to life in the coming year.

As usual, there is much to read in our newsletter. We hope as always to receive your feedback on issues and concerns, and your continued involvement in the work of APFACTS.

We wish you a very Merry Christmas and hope that your holidays are safe and enjoyable.

Charuni Weerasooriya, APFACTS President

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President's Message

Welcome to our Term 4, 2012 newsletter.

Executive Committee members

[Charuni Weerasooriya](#)
President

[Michael Healey](#)
Vice President

[Peter Murray](#)
Treasurer

[Kirsten Wilkinson](#)
Secretary

Do you know of an event or resource that non-government school parents and students should know about?

Email us at:
admin@apfacts.org.au

ACT ELECTION

The ACT election was a hard fought contest which has resulted in Labor 8, Liberals 8 and the Greens 1 holding ACT Assembly seats to 2016.

With the newly formed Labor/Greens collaboration taking on leadership of Canberra for the next four years, we are keen to see and be part of the vision and plans for education in the ACT. It is our hope that it will be a co-operative and consultative Government that better reflect the needs of all students and parents in the ACT.

The Labor Party and Greens made election pledges in the lead-up to the election for ACT non-government schools to have increased funding based on a needs basis. They also committed to implement Gonski. While these pledges did not go as far as the Liberals, in increasing recurrent funding to all non-government students to 25% to bring it in line with other states in Australia, we are keen to see the pledges brought to fruition.

APFACTS is due to meet the new Education Minister, Ms Joy Burch MLA, before year end. We will be discussing the promises made and timeline for implementation, concerns and interests of non-government school parents, and the plans that the Government has for implementing a new funding regime in the ACT.

NATIONAL PLAN FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The National Plan for school improvement is the continuing chapter of the Gonski review of school funding.

The aim of the plan is to take Australia into the top five countries in the world in reading, writing and mathematics by 2025. The plan is to be phased in over six years from 2014 and will include:

- a new way of funding schools which will include a benchmark amount for every Australian student, based on the costs of schools which are already achieving great results
- more training for teachers and principals, and ongoing professional development and support for them throughout their careers
- more help for schools that need extra support to improve their results
- extra support for the students who need it most, like children with disability and children from low income families.
- more information for parents and the community about school performance.

All schools under the National Plan for school improvement will receive:

- funding calculated according to the needs of every individual student they enroll
- a benchmark funding amount for every student, called a schooling resource standard (SRS). The SRS will be based on what it costs to educate students at schools that are already getting good results.
- loadings for students who need extra support, including students with limited English skills, from lower income families, indigenous students, and students with disability
- loadings for students in rural and remote areas and small schools
- annual indexation which will ensure that all schools will see funding increases every year.

Fully publicly funded schools include:

- all government schools
- SRS schools (special schools serving children with disability and special assistance schools)

Non-government school funding will be adjusted based on parents' capacity to contribute to school resources.

More information on the [APFACTS website](#)

AUSTRALIA IN THE ASIA CENTURY

In 2011, The Australian Government commissioned a white paper on Australia in the Asian Century. This was released in October 2012. The white paper sets out goals and aspirations for the whole of Australia – governments, business, unions and the broader community.

In the context of education, the white paper highlights the need for Australia to be exposed to Asian culture by incorporating its history, economics and political studies at schools and universities. The Asia Education Foundation estimates a figure of \$1 billion as needed to have some of the aspirations of the paper realized. These include 50% of young people in Australia learning an Asian language over the next decade. Another goal is for ten Australian universities to reach the top 100 in the world by 2025. Currently Australia has six in the first 100 of the Times Higher Education's global rankings. Read more [Australia in the Asian Century](#)

NDIS (NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME) UPDATE

The *National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)* draft legislation was introduced into the Parliament last week with a \$1 billion commitment to support the first stage of the scheme.

The draft legislation sets out a framework for the national scheme – the first stage of which will benefit more than 20,000 people with disability, their families and carers in the Hunter in NSW, the Barwon area of Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, and the ACT.

The legislation will establish the NDIS Launch Transition Agency as an independent body, working with people to identify their goals and aspirations, and providing them with the support they need to help them reach their full potential.

The Agency will also work with service providers and other organisations to make sure people with disability can access the kind of care and support they need to pursue their goals, including supporting carers in their important role.

The consultation phase will continue with a view to finalizing the legislation in 2013. Read [more information](#) on NDIS and the ACT. Read the [draft legislation](#).

CURRICULUM UPDATE

It's been a busy year for schools in the ACT as they have forged ahead in implementing the Australian Curriculum phase 1 learning areas.

The ACT is the lead jurisdiction in implementing the National Curriculum. This has seen all sectors (Government, Catholic and Independent) work together. Next year will see all four phase 1 learning areas taught in classrooms across all year levels to Year 10 using the Australian Curriculum.

The Australian Curriculum: Geography for students from preschool to year 12 will be the first of the Phase 2 learning areas expected to be released in December 2012, with the arts curriculum and the first two of the languages curricula for Italian and Chinese scheduled for release in mid-2013.

A new ACT implementation plan is due to be published at the end of 2012, to take account of the release of these Phase 2 learning areas. The Phase 1 senior curricula for years 11 and 12 are scheduled for endorsement by Ministers of Education in December 2012.

Parents can view the Australian Curriculum descriptors, achievement standards and samples of work by year level by visiting the Australian Curriculum site and visiting the Curriculum tab. [More](#)

NAPLAN

Another round of NAPLAN finished! The [2012 NAPLAN Summary \(Preliminary\) Report](#) is now available. This report provides preliminary national and state/territory results for each year level (3, 5, 7 and 9) and testing area (reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy). It also compares national and State/Territory achievement in each year and domain from 2008 to 2011 and 2012.

There is always much debate about NAPLAN testing, some recent articles include:

- [ACT tops regions with NAPLAN](#)
- [Pyne vows to scrap my school rankings](#)
- [Naplan its all about jumping hoops for number crunchers](#)
- [Naplan tests take a heavy toll](#)

APFACTS is interested in your views about NAPLAN.

- What do you think about NAPLAN?
- How does your school approach NAPLAN testing ?
- How do you and your children feel about sitting NAPLAN tests ?
- Should NAPLAN be used further than a tool for teachers, principals and parents ?

[Your views on Naplan](#)

STUDENT WELLBEING IN THE ACT

APFACTS has been pleased to be involved with both Kids Matter (primary school and childcare) and Mind Matters (secondary) this year, and has advocated strongly for student wellbeing to be a priority in schools. Both programs encourage a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. They bring together all stakeholders; parents, students, staff and the community, to work together to create a protective environment that promotes mental health and wellbeing on both the social and emotional levels.

"We are very pleased that many of our non-government schools are commencing or underway in Kids Matter and Mind Matters accreditation in the ACT. Bridging the gap between home life and schooling is what can make a real difference in the lives of children. It is truly positive when everyone involved with a student is committed to bringing about the best for them – wellbeing and schooling outcomes must go hand in hand if we are truly to assist our young people with their future aspirations." said Charuni Weerasooriya, APFACTS President.

We would love to hear your stories on how Kids Matter and/or Mind Matters is going at your school. [Your views on student wellbeing](#)

For more information on how your school can get involved, contact:

- Kids Matter: [Marqy Wylde-Browne](#), Coordinator – ACT KidsMatter Primary
- Mind Matters : [Cay Merritt](#), Coordinator – Mind Matters ACT (cay.merritt@act.gov.au)

ANGIE WILCOCK'S NEW BOOK – THE TRANSITION TIGHTROPE

Many parents remember the series of APFACTS workshops in 2011

conducted by Angie Wilcock, the highly regarded speaker on transitions in education.

Angie's new book, *The Transition Tightrope*, published by Routledge UK, is due for release in Australia and the US in early January, 2013. It targets parents, teachers, school counsellors, Year advisors – indeed anyone who lives or works with young people in the transition from the primary to secondary education phase. Particular areas of interest for parents include offering support on how to understand the students in this group and staying connected and engaged in their education.

Expected for release in Australia early in the new year, you can obtain your copy from [Book Depository](#).

PARENT RESOURCES

- [Parenting minefield that is social media](#)
- [A new website with work tasks for children with Autism](#)
- [Setting students up for success](#)
- [Valuing boys, valuing girls by Andrew Fuller](#)
- [Parent engagement in children's education](#)

GET INVOLVED !

Want to get involved?

- [Join APFACTS Parents Advisory Council](#)

Interested in education issues but only have time for quick surveys? Join our Parent advisory council and help us by giving your views on education issues as and when they happen.

Have your say !

- 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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