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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

APFACTS efforts this year are once again something I feel we can all be proud of as we have delivered a greater, stronger parent perspective in education dialogue, policy, practice and reform.

Importantly we have taken a leadership role in progressing parent engagement in the ACT and nationally. In March 2014, ACT Education Minister, Joy Burch MLA commissioned Australian Child Research Alliance (ARACY) to begin a pilot project into parent engagement put forward by APFACTS in February 2013. Our vision and solid case for investment in this area was heard and this ground breaking project will see the ACT develop the first Australian benchmark into parent engagement and assist schools to better engage with parents to support student learning.

APFACTS Cyber Savvy week was held in September and saw a week-long focus on cyber safety and digital citizenship for students, parents and the wider Canberra community. Over 1,200 secondary students attended the high impact two hour workshops that focussed on cyberbullying and personal leadership. Our parent workshops saw Nina Funnell, Martine Oglethorpe and ThinkUKnow share advice on cyber bullying, online grooming, privacy management, app safety and inappropriate content and connecting with kids around technology.

APFACTS Community Forum was also held featuring a panel including the ACT Education Minister, Joy Burch MLA, Chris Faulks, Canberra Business Council, Craig Edwards, Associate Principal Gungahlin College and Matthew Purcell, Canberra Boys Grammar School (Code Cadets). The forum was well attended and furthered an ACT-wide conversation about digital skills and safety.

Our strong advocacy agenda this year on behalf of parents on a range of issues including changes to school bus services, faster turnaround for NAPLAN results, parental engagement and digital literacy alongside greater media and social media presence has increased our ACT parent voice, profile and reach.

As usual, there is much to read in our newsletter. We wish you a very Merry Christmas and hope that your holidays are safe and enjoyable.

Charuni Weerasooriya, APFACTS President

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DAVID PRICE WORKSHOP

APFACTS was delighted to host a keynote workshop by international education futurist, David Price OBE in Canberra on Wednesday 12th November at the Headley Beare Centre for Teaching and Learning in Stirling. David's keynote highlighted the challenge facing all parents and educators in how to best support children for a future where we cannot predict what jobs will exist.

David has long held that education must look towards developing more innovative ways to engage learners. His best-selling book "Open" explores our fast changing technology environment and the impacts on how we will

In this edition

- ▶ [President's Message](#)
- ▶ [David Price Workshop](#)
- ▶ [Changes to School Bus Services](#)
- ▶ [NAPLAN](#)
- ▶ [Curriculum Update](#)
- ▶ [APFACTS ACT Budget Submission](#)
- ▶ [National School Chaplaincy Program](#)
- ▶ [Parental Engagement](#)
- ▶ [Pathways Website](#)
- ▶ [Children's Use of Technology: Survey](#)
- ▶ [Parent Resources](#)
- ▶ [Stay in Touch with Education Issues](#)

President's Message

Welcome to the APFACTS Term 4, 2014 newsletter.

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

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Executive Committee members

[Charuni Weerasooriya](#)
President

[Paul Crowley](#)
Vice-President

[Stuart Blackford](#)
Treasurer

live, learn and earn. The workshop invited parents and educators to examine the lens in which they see education and learning for students, focusing on what can be done in partnership to increase learning opportunities for our young people. This workshop explored:

- What does learning look like in schools today and in the future?
- What should an education worth having be and look like?
- How do we challenge and change attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that inhibit effective partnerships between parents, teachers and young people in learning and schooling?
- Strategies of connecting and collaborating to achieve the best outcomes for student learning.

The Workshop was well attended by both parents and teachers with over 60 people registering on-line and several people signed in on the night. There was a great deal of discussion on what an education worth having should look like and we received very positive feedback from the surveys that were distributed towards the end of the evening.

To all those who attended the keynote and workshop with David Price OBE and those that didn't. Check out the [video compilation](#) from events held in WA, SA, ACT and TAS.

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CHANGES TO SCHOOL BUS SERVICES

As you will be aware on 1 September 2014, ACTION implemented a new School bus service for schools in the ACT. Of the many issues we elevated with ACTION in relation to these changes, perhaps the most prominent was the fact that parents and schools were not consulted about the changes, and received little notice of the changes once they were agreed upon.

When the new bus service commenced operation it was very difficult for parents to raise their concerns as there was no real mechanism for them to be able to do so. In response to concerns about the impacts of the changes to school bus services, ACT Public Transport director James Roncon stated that "it was difficult to make one-off changes to the timetable but the school services would be reviewed four weeks after the new network was introduced." To read more on that [article](#):

"APFACTS understands that a review was due to occur in October and then delayed until November as Katy Gallagher stated on talk back radio that the Terms of Reference had not been decided upon," said Julie Sengelman, Executive Officer APFACTS. "We are working to ensure that the review goes ahead and have been collating feedback from parents with children in non-government schools to assist us in advocating on their behalf."

We encourage all parents to contact us if they have not already done so, to ensure that we are able to provide comprehensive feedback of the impacts of these changes to our school communities.

To share your views, please complete the following brief [survey](#).

Alternatively you can email the Executive Officer, Julie Sengelman at executiveofficer@apfacts.org.au

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NAPLAN

NAPLAN online

At a meeting of Australian education ministers, the Commonwealth and all state and territory governments agreed to move and fund NAPLAN online. This decision will see NAPLAN testing available in schools to trial from 2016.

[Jeannette Fierro](#)
Secretary

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

Email us at:
admin@apfacts.org.au

The Commonwealth put \$24.7 million on the table to develop the platform for NAPLAN online; states and territories have committed to roll it out across the country. Read the Minister for Education, the Hon. Christopher Pyne MP [media release](#)

APC Webinar

Rob Randall, CEO ACARA recently participated in a [webinar](#) hosted by the Australian Parents Council (APC) last week, where he spoke about the move to online assessment. He stated that "It was great to connect with parents and families and answer their questions about this important investment into their children's future."

NAPLAN National Report

Next month, ACARA will be publishing the national report from this year's NAPLAN assessments. Students who participated in the first ever NAPLAN tests in 2008 completed their final NAPLAN tests as Year 9 students this year. ACARA looks forward to working with states and territories to analyse this unique data set – allowing them to see how students have progressed in the important areas of literacy and numeracy across seven years of schooling.

CURRICULUM UPDATE

Australian Curriculum Review

In October the Report into the Review of the National Curriculum was released. Following is a link with the details of the report with the recommendations outlined. Recommended reading is the Review of the Australian Curriculum – Initial Australian Government Response document as this provides a synopsis of the [Review](#).

"APFACTS has been advocating for parent friendly guides on the National Curriculum and is delighted to see that has been included in the recommendations" stated Charuni Weerasooriya, APFACTS President. APFACTS is keen to hear feedback from parents on the recommendations of the Review.

Review of ACT Year 12 Certificate

The Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) recently announced that all senior secondary students in the ACT will be required to complete an English subject from next year following the first major review of the Year 12 Certificate in three decades. "The Board also strongly recommended students complete a Mathematics course as part of their ACT Year 12 Certificate. This is also important for our students' futures."

Other recommendations include increasing the minimum number of courses required to receive an ACT Year 12 Certificate, and issuing students with a testamur (certificate of graduation) as well as an academic transcript. To find out more please read the following [Media Release](#).

The Education Council recently released the National Assessment Program – Civics and Citizenship (NAP-CC) [Public Report 2013](#). The results show many students across the country are actively engaged in their local communities and have a good understanding of civics and citizenship.

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.

Are you interested in curriculum issues? If you have any areas regarding curriculum you would like us to discuss, please email us.

APFACTS ACT BUDGET SUBMISSION

Submissions to the ACT Budget process for 2015/2016 were called in September. APFACTS submitted its budget consultation paper to ACT Treasurer, Andrew Barr, MLA.

“The funding of non-government schools continues to be an area for concern for parents in the ACT. The indexation rate of 3% that has been promised will not keep pace with the real increases in costs of education in the ACT and parents are likely to face increases in school fees as a result. In addition there is no capacity for non-government schools to apply for aid in funding capital costs as there are in other States and we would like to see similar programs introduced in the ACT” said Julie Sengelman, Executive Officer, APFACTS.

“As a consequence of our previous budget submissions we were delighted that in 2014 the ACT government has funded ARACY to establish a benchmark and measurement tools around parental engagement. In our 2015/2016 budget we would like to capitalise on this opportunity for parents by providing them with the information they will need to be able to successfully partner with schools in the education of their children, by providing mechanisms for them to do so” stated, Julie Sengelman.

If you would like a copy of APFACTS budget submission for 2015/2016, please contact: Julie Sengelman – executiveofficer@apfacts.org.au

NATIONAL SCHOOL CHAPLAINCY PROGRAM

Included in the 2014-15 Federal Budget, the Australian Government allocated \$243.8 million over four years to fund the National School Chaplaincy Programme (NSCP).

As a consequence of a recent High Court decision, the Government has designed the new NSCP so that funding is delivered via states and territories rather than directly to schools. Where state and territories agree to administer the following conditions have been imposed by the Commonwealth:

- participation by schools and students will be voluntary;
- schools will be able to select a chaplain of any faith;
- chaplains will not be permitted to proselytise; and
- chaplains must respect, accept and be sensitive to other people's views and values and must meet minimum qualification requirements.

In the ACT there are 54 ACT schools participating in the current program and schools will now have to apply for the funding in a competitive process to ensure continued funding for their programs. APFACTS understand that it is likely that not all schools will be successful in their application for funding under the new NSCP.

PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

As you are well aware, APFACTS is a strong advocate for parental engagement in schooling. It is our belief that when parents and schools form collaborative and supportive communities that children's learning, behaviour and academic success is supported and enriched.

In 2014, APFACTS has been delighted to work with ARACY and the ACT Government to develop a shared understanding of parent engagement in the ACT and build the foundations for leading-edge parent engagement in the ACT. To learn more about this important please read the following [brochure](#).

Have you checked out our website lately? There are some great resources and reports on parent engagement, [click here](#).

PATHWAYS WEBSITE

At a recent APFACTS Committee meeting we received a presentation on the launch of The 'Pathways' [website](#) from the ACT Education Directorate which provides an online application for Pathways Plans for young people aged 10 to 17 years in the ACT. The website has been developed to improve communication between parents, carers, agencies and educational settings supporting young people, and ensures cohesion in Pathways Planning and career guidance across all government and non-government schools in the ACT.

"This is a great tool to use with your child as they are able to create a secure profile to help them follow their interests and investigate what pathways could be open to them. It will also provide your child with a resume builder so that when they are looking for a part-time job as a teenager or beyond all their details and interests will have been captured in a resume," said Julie Sengelman, Executive Officer APFACTS.

Accessing Pathways Planning online now allows young people to share their plans and discuss their future with supportive adults in a structured format. Your support and discussions can lead to rich conversations about their interests, goals and the journey ahead and will provide you an opportunity to help your child to set goals to achieve their dreams.

CHILDREN'S USE OF TECHNOLOGY: SURVEY

Researchers at Curtin University want to hear from parents of 0-5 year olds to find out more about their use of electronic devices. In a fast changing world it is no surprise that there is very little detailed information available about the current use of electronic devices by young children. To assist in providing data around this issue you can help change this by filling in this short online [survey](#).

PARENT RESOURCES

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

Parent Resources:

- Listen to a recent interview with Danah Boyd, author of 'It's Complicated', as she attempts to [demystify teens' online actions and behaviors](#)
- Working together with Education providers, parents, carers and students is the best way to [positively influence student outcomes](#)
- Good tips for teenagers on [how to study for exams](#)
- An interesting way to look at [internet use and teenagers](#)
- To all those who attended the keynote and workshop with David Price OBE and those that didn't. Check out the [video compilation](#) from events held in WA, SA, ACT and TAS. Interested in your views on what makes 'An education worth having?'
- The video of the ACARA webinar held on Nov 20 with Rob Randall has been updated on the [APC website, to view](#)

News items of interest:

- Changes to school kids bonus to take effect from 2016 with income testing changes to take effect 1 Jan 2015. Check it out [here](#)
- What do you think about [learning a second language at preschool?](#)

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