

Education

ACT Labor is proud of its achievements in providing high quality education for all students in the ACT. We have made a record investment in the public education system and have already delivered smaller class sizes of 21 in those important early years in all Government schools.

This is because ACT Labor believes that education is one of the most important foundations for building a better city and a stronger community.

ACT Labor is making sure every Canberra family has access to the best schools and the best teachers as well as providing state-of-the art facilities, classrooms and IT, to make sure our children are ready for the future.

Since coming to office the ACT Labor Government has increased funding for public education by over 40% and since 2006 we have invested more than \$350 million in building new schools and upgrading every public school.

We have invested more than \$200 million in improving the quality of our teachers. We have reformed early childhood education and have invested \$15 million to establish four new early childhood schools in Isabella Plains, Narrabundah, Southern Cross and Lyons.

And we know that our investment is delivering results. ACT students are leading the nation in maths and literacy and we have the highest rate of retention to year 12 in Australia.

ACT Labor has a vision for an even better public education system for Canberra's children. Through a range of new measures we will build better schools, invest in quality teaching, smaller class sizes and new and improved facilities for a better future for all our children.

Jon Stanhope
Chief Minister

Andrew Barr
Minister for Education and Training

A Proud Record of Investment in our Schools

ACT Labor is committed to providing high quality education for all students in the territory, no matter what their background or where they live. We believe education is one of the most important foundations for building a better city and a stronger community. Quality education is an investment in the future prosperity of our community.

ACT Labor is making sure every Canberra family has access to the best schools and the best teachers, through our record investment in our public education system.

Since coming to office the ACT Labor Government has increased funding for public education by over 40% and since 2006 we have invested more than \$350 million in building new schools and upgrading every public school. This record level of funding has underpinned a world-class public education system and established a foundation for continued academic excellence and achievement.

We have also recognised the importance of the early years of schooling. We have a comprehensive early childhood education policy that has seen the inclusion of preschool into our primary schools structure and our curriculum framework. Next year will see the establishment of four new early childhood schools in Lyons, Narrabundah, Isabella Plains and Scullin. These schools will provide world-class early childhood services and education for students aged 0-8, and their families.

There is no doubt that ACT Labor's investment in education is supporting better learning outcomes for students. In reading, writing and maths ACT students are leading those from other States and Territories and other OECD countries. ACT schools currently have the highest rate of retention to year 12 in Australia, young people in the Territory are the most likely to undertake tertiary studies and vocational training and more children in the ACT are attending early childhood education and care programs prior to commencing school.

Our Record

Quality teaching

ACT Labor believes the most important factor influencing a child's education is the quality of the teacher in their classroom. We believe teachers should be recognised as professionals and should be paid a salary that recognises their importance in our community.

ACT Labor has:

- Invested more than \$200 million in improving the quality of our teachers; and
- Raised teachers' pay by between 39% and 60% since being elected - a stark contrast to the previous Liberal Government that cut teachers' pay in real terms.

Early childhood

ACT Labor believes in the importance of the early years of schooling and has introduced a comprehensive early childhood policy and funding support for early childhood initiatives.

ACT Labor has:

- Lowered class sizes for children in kindergarten to year 3;
- Invested \$15 million to establish four new early childhood schools in Isabella Plains, Narrabundah, Southern Cross and Lyons;
- Invested over \$8 million to provide Canberra's four year olds with 12 hours of free preschool per week;
- Invested \$1.8 million to provide additional staff to coordinate the delivery of integrated child and support services and to fund places in child care facilities for children from disadvantaged families;
- Amalgamated all preschools with primary schools to enhance transition between the years; and
- Established a new curriculum framework that includes a curriculum for the preschool year.

Renewing our schools

ACT Labor has undertaken the largest ever renewal of our public schools. We have committed more than \$350 million to building new schools and upgrading every public school. Under Labor, new, state-of-the-art schools are being built in areas of need in the community.

ACT Labor has:

- Built and opened the \$32 million Amaroo School;
- Built and opened the \$23 million Harrison Primary School;
- Built the new West Belconnen P-10 School to open in 2009;
- Committed \$67.7 million for the Gungahlin College;
- Committed \$54 million for a new P-10 school in Tuggeranong; and
- Invested \$1.5 million for the design phase of the new Harrison High School.

Labor's record \$350 million injection is seeing all public schools upgraded including:

Brindabella	Molonglo	Ginninderra
Bonython Primary	Ainslie School	Aranda Primary
Calwell High	Alfred Deakin High	Belconnen High
Calwell Primary	Amaroo School	Canberra High
Caroline Chisholm School	Arawang Primary	Charnwood Dunlop Primary
Charles Conder Primary	Black Mountain School	Cranleigh School
Erindale College	Campbell High School	Evatt Primary
Fadden Primary	Campbell Primary School	Florey Primary
Farrer Primary	Canberra College	Fraser Primary
Gilmore Primary	Chapman Primary	Giralang Primary
Gordon Primary	Co-op (O'Connor) P-2	Gold Creek School (HS)
Gowrie Primary	Curtin Primary	Gold Creek Primary
Isabella Plains P-2	Dickson College	Hawker College
Lake Tuggeranong College	Duffy Primary	Hawker Primary
Lanyon High	Forrest Primary	Holt Primary
Melrose High	Garran Primary	Kaleen High
Monash Primary	Hughes Primary	Kaleen Primary
Richardson Primary	Lyneham High School	Lake Ginninderra College
Taylor Primary	Lyneham Primary	Latham Primary
Theodore Primary	Lyons Primary	Macgregor Primary
Torrens Primary	Majura Primary	Macquarie Primary
Urambi Primary	Malkara School	Maribyrnong Primary
Wanniassa Hills Primary	Mawson Primary	Melba Copland School
Wanniassa School	Narrabundah College	Miles Franklin Primary
	Narrabundah Primary	Mt Rogers Primary
	Ngunnawal Primary	Southern Cross
	North Ainslie Primary	Weetangera Primary
	Palmerston Primary	
	Red Hill Primary	
	Stromlo High School	
	Telopea Park School	
	Turner Primary	
	Woden School	
	Yarralumla Primary	

Greening our schools and TAFE

ACT Labor believes climate change is one of the most important challenges facing our community. We are embracing ecological sustainability in our school buildings and are also helping to educate students on the importance of looking after our environment. We recognise that we need to lead by example when teaching the next generation about the importance of sustaining our environment.

ACT Labor has:

- Invested \$20 million in a ten year program to make our schools carbon neutral by 2017;
- Ensured all new public school buildings are environmentally sustainable through state of the art design, improved energy efficiency, air quality, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions;
- Won the Master Builders Association National Environment & Energy Building Efficiency Award for Amaroo School;
- Incorporated solar panels, wind turbines, water storage tanks and roof water run-off recycling systems as well as solar maximising design into our schools;
- Supported schools participating in the Sustainable Schools initiative; and
- Reduced energy consumption by over 35%, water consumption by 40% and waste disposal by 45% at the Canberra Institute of Technology.

Supporting disadvantaged students

ACT Labor believes in the right of all children to have access to high quality education, no matter what their background or where they live. We are committed to supporting the welfare of students and their families to help them reach their potential at school. We also recognise that some students and their families need extra assistance.

ACT Labor has:

- Invested \$14.6 million to ensure a dedicated pastoral care co-ordinator in every high school to help ensure student welfare;
- Provided extra funding for 17 non-teacher professionals in our schools, such as psychologists and disability and youth workers;
- Established three achievement centres for students in years 7 and 8 who are not coping well with mainstream schooling;
- Funded the CC Cares program at Canberra College which provides education and support to young carers, parents, and pregnant students in the ACT and surrounding districts;
- Supported the Stay program designed for students who need assistance or support to complete their year 12 certificate;
- Supported the ECLIPSE, SITE and SPICE programs supporting students at risk of not receiving a year 10 certificate;

- Provided additional equity funding for schools with students from lower socio-economic backgrounds;
- Extended the Secondary Schools Bursary Scheme, assisting low income families of students in years 7-10 with education costs; and
- Established the Student Support Fund to assist disadvantaged students in all ACT public schools.

Support for Indigenous students

ACT Labor believes in supporting Indigenous Canberrans and their families to achieve success in education. We recognise that Indigenous students are over represented in the lower achievement bands in testing and that many students and their families face issues outside of the classroom that can stop students achieving their full potential. We are committed to closing the education gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canberrans.

ACT Labor has:

- Required all school principals to have an increased focus on Indigenous student outcomes as part of their performance agreements;
- Committed an additional \$3.3 million to a suite of strategies designed to improve the literacy and numeracy of Indigenous students;
- Provided support and mentoring for higher achieving Indigenous students in years 6 and 10 to successfully transition to high school and college respectively;
- Supplied Indigenous Education Officers to work with students to improve school attendance and establish the connection between schools and their Indigenous communities;
- Established a new category in the Training and Excellence Awards to recognise the outstanding efforts, achievements and accomplishments of a team, individual staff member or volunteer in improving outcomes for Indigenous people in ACT public schools;
- Commenced discussions with the ANU to develop a process to encourage senior secondary Indigenous students to enter Medical Studies at the ANU;
- Supported Koori preschools, delivering early childhood programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children 3-5 years of age; and
- Supported the Dare to Lead Program with 77 public schools participating. The Program encourages and supports principals to improve educational outcomes for indigenous students through innovative teaching methods.

Promoting health for students

ACT Labor is committed to the well being of students in schools and has promoted healthy lifestyles for students. Labor believes that giving children good information about how to live a healthy life can lead to a better quality of life, as well as better education outcomes.

ACT Labor has:

- Released the Get a Move On policy aimed at promoting PE in primary schools;
- Established the Children's Physical Activity Foundation to revitalise physical education and sport in schools;
- Established the Minister's Physical Activity Challenge which has seen 13,000 students in 47 schools participating, with participating schools eligible for sporting equipment prizes;
- Provided \$1.2 million to give all public primary schools access to specialist PE teachers;
- Committed \$3 million to fund the redevelopment of the Erindale Leisure Centre, an important recreational centre for Erindale College and the surrounding area;
- Committed \$1.864 million for the planning and organisation of the 2008 Pacific School Games, a significant international multi-sport event for primary and secondary students; and
- Introduced a Canteen Accreditation Program for ACT schools, promoting the supply of healthy and nutritious food in our schools.

Promoting excellence in our schools

ACT Labor believes in providing high quality education and in promoting excellence in all our schools.

ACT Labor has:

- Developed a new curriculum framework for all children in preschool to year 10 in every school – an ACT first;
- Ensured all public schools teach a language other than English by 2010;
- Provided extra support for the performing arts in public schools, including \$10 million for new performing arts centres at Lyneham and Calwell High Schools;
- Funded new instruments for schools to the tune of \$250,000 – this funding ensures new instruments for the development of bands at Harrison School and the new school in West Belconnen as well as sets of musical instruments for the new early childhood schools; and
- Established the ANU Secondary College in conjunction with the ANU – giving students the opportunity to gain university credit while still at school

Supporting parental choice – funding to non-Government schools

ACT Labor believes in high quality education for all of Canberra's students. While we strongly believe the priority for any Government funding should be in strengthening the public education system, we support the more than 40% of Canberra families who choose to send their children to non-government schools.

ACT Labor has:

- Increased funding to students in non-government schools by over 35% since being elected;
- Invested an extra \$4.2 million to improve student access to information and communication technology, counselling services and other equity programs in non-government schools;
- Provided \$3.2 million in the 2008-09 Budget to increase the indexation rate applied to ACT non-government school funding, providing additional resources to schools to improve student learning outcomes;
- Provided \$1.6 million to assist non-government schools become carbon neutral;
- Provided \$1.6 million to help meet the needs of students with a disability in non-government schools, leading to better outcomes and more opportunities for these students;
- Supported non-government school students to participate in national testing;
- Expanded the ANU Secondary College to also allow opportunities for non-government school students; and
- Supported physical education in non-government schools through the Minister's Physical Activity Challenge and Children's Physical Activity Foundation grants.

Moving Forward

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will build on these commitments with \$51.4 million in new education funding over the next four years. The funding will be devoted to:

- More teachers and smaller class sizes – across all years of schooling;
- Ensuring the best teachers in our classrooms;
- Renewing our public schools;
- Ensuring the ACT continues to lead the nation in education ICT;
- Getting back to basics – reading, writing and maths;
- Supporting gifted and talented students;
- Supporting languages education;
- Supporting innovation in our secondary schools;
- Increasing support for school-based apprentices;
- Ensuring the best education in the early years;
- Increasing administrative support in schools;
- Strengthening parent involvement in our schools; and
- Increasing support for students in non-government schools.

More teachers and lower class sizes

ACT Labor believes the single most important factor affecting a child's education is the teacher in their classroom. We have already provided more teachers to lower class sizes to 21 in the important early years of schooling. Our commitment is to extend this to every year of schooling in all public schools.

ACT Labor, since being elected, has funded initiatives that have seen more than 250 extra teachers in ACT classrooms.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will:

- Commit over \$22 million over four years to employ new teachers across all years of schooling;
- Lower class sizes in every year of schooling beginning from the 2010 school year;
- Lower class sizes in primary schools to an average of 21;
- Lower class sizes in high schools to an average of 21; and
- Lower class sizes in colleges to an average of 19.

Ensuring the best teachers in our classrooms

ACT Labor believes our students deserve the best teachers in their classroom. To attract and retain the best teachers we need to pay teachers a salary that is reflective of their professionalism and position in our community. We also need to ensure teachers are supported in our classrooms so they can concentrate on the most important thing – the education of our children.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will:

- Work with the Commonwealth Government to develop and implement a professional pay scheme for teachers that will establish an 'accomplished teacher' category that recognises special skills in teaching;
- Invest \$1.6 million over four years to upgrade School Business Managers who provide administrative support in our public schools. This initiative ensures our teachers are better supported and able to concentrate on the most important part of their jobs – educating students; and
- Invest \$400,000 to strengthen volunteering programs in our public schools to better support teachers.

Getting back to basics – reading, writing and maths

The ACT Labor Government believes the foundation for all students to achieve excellence in education is ensuring strong skills in reading, writing and maths. We are committed to ensuring schools prioritise the teaching of these important foundation skills and to bridging the gap between the highest and lowest achievers.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will:

- Require all schools to develop action plans to reduce the achievement gap in their school;
- Invest \$8.2 million to provide specialist literacy and numeracy teachers for every cluster of schools. These specialists will assist classroom teachers develop literacy and numeracy lesson plans, analyse student data and help teachers develop targeted plans to help students in need. Specialists will also be able to develop individual learning plans for those students in need of the most assistance and work one on one with these students. This initiative will see outcomes in schools improve, especially for those students in the lowest achievement bands;
- Invest \$3.1 million over four years to improve the literacy and numeracy outcomes for those students who currently lie within the lowest performance band of achievement by increasing the access to special programs for children who speak English as a second language. This initiative will see another 8.4 teachers employed in our schools; and
- Invest \$486,000 to establish the National Capital Literacy and Learning Centre (NCLLC). This is a joint initiative between the University of Canberra and the ACT Government aimed at establishing a new research and teaching focus on literacy and learning. The NCLLC will prepare ACT teachers to ensure high literacy outcomes for students. It will also build on the outstanding work of the *Parents as Tutors Program* and assist parents with strategies to help their children's literacy and numerary development.

Renewing our public schools and building new schools

Building on the ACT Labor Government's commitment to renewing our public schools, we will continue to invest in upgrading our schools as well building new schools in areas of need. We are also committed to instilling pride in our public schools.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will:

- Set aside up to \$45 million to build a new high school in Harrison to be opened in 2012. Harrison is an area of high population growth and educational need. This high school will be co-located with the Harrison Primary School which was opened in 2008 and will provide a state of the art school for Harrison residents and the surrounding community;
- Build a \$5 million performing arts centre for the students of Canberra College, and the Woden community. This facility will complement similar facilities at Lyneham High School and Calwell High School and will greatly add to the performing arts curriculum at the school. The facility will also provide the Woden community with a community theatre for their use;
- Ensure colour codes and dress standards are enforced in all public schools and encourage individual schools to work with students to design school uniforms which will be popular for students to wear; and

- Provide a \$5 million capital upgrade fund to improve landscaping and play surfaces at schools across Canberra. The drought has affected the 'look and feel' of our public schools as well the play spaces for children. The ACT Labor Government has already upgraded many schools as part of the record \$90 million school renewal program. This initiative will see more play spaces upgraded to synthetic soft fall surfaces to ensure children have appropriate physical activity spaces and will improve landscaping to improve the look of our public schools.
- Schools to receive new artificial grass play areas:
 - Torrens Primary School
 - Theodore Primary School
 - Florey Primary School
 - Evatt Primary School
 - Telopea Park School
 - Calwell Primary School
 - Taylor Primary School
 - Macgregor Primary School
 - Weetangera Primary School
 - Chisholm Primary School

Non-Government School Equity Fund

The ACT Labor Government is committed to equity within the non-Government schools system for all students. Since being elected the ACT Labor Government has increased funding support for non-government schools by over 35% and has provided specialist funding for helping the sector assist students with a disability.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will:

- Provide \$ 4.1 million over 4 years to help address need in non-Government schools. This initiative is aimed at promoting equity within the non-government school system.

Strengthening parent involvement in our schools

ACT Labor recognises the vast amount of time and commitment put in by parents to our school communities. We currently provide over \$130,000 per year to support peak parent associations in government and non-government schools.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will:

- Invest \$2.1 million to provide each parent group or association in every ACT school, government and non-government, with a one-off \$15,000 grant to be spent on a project or projects to improve the school. This investment also includes \$1,500 for each preschool parent association.

Ensuring the ACT remains Australia's education Information and Communication Technology (ICT) leader

The ACT Labor Government is committed to ensuring our students are well equipped for life in the 21st century. Our record investment in ICT since being elected has placed the ACT as the national ICT leader. The broadband, smartboards, laptop computers and wireless networks we have funded have significantly altered the way students learn and teachers teach, as well as how parents are involved in their child's education. But we know that in a rapidly changing world, we need to continue investing in ICT to ensure students have access to state-of-the-art technology.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will:

- Commit \$7.5 million over the next three years for ICT grants to public and non-government primary schools for investment in ICT infrastructure including smartboards and new PCs. \$2.5 million will be made available to non-government schools and \$5 million to public schools; and
- Invest \$2 million to establish an Innovative, Sustainable, Practical, Interactive Research in Education (InSPIRE) Centre – a joint collaboration between the University of Canberra and the ACT Government. The InSPIRE Centre will provide teachers with access to high level professional training in state of the art ICT – cementing the ACT as the national leader in education ICT and ensuring our teachers are equipped to educate students about how to use ICT. This is an investment in ensuring the ACT continues to be the nation's ICT leader.

Supporting apprentices in our schools

ACT Labor believes in supporting students into work and further study and recognises that in a time of skills crisis in the ACT support for students as apprentices is important. In 2007 the ACT Labor Government announced a goal of 500 Australian School-Based Apprentices each year to support our students into life beyond school.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will:

- Provide \$1.4 million to employ 100 new Australian School Based Apprentices each year through Group Training Arrangements. The Apprentices will be employed in a number of industry sectors and help schools in a range of areas such as administration, ICT and sport and recreation.

Nurturing our gifted and talented students

The ACT Labor Government believes in nurturing the talents of all students, including those gifted and talented students who may need more assistance in mainstream education. We understand that nurturing special gifts and talents can sometimes be challenging for parents and families as well as teachers.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will invest \$979,000 over four years to:

- Ensure all public schools identify gifted and talented students and provide for their education through extension classes, curriculum, enrichment and acceleration;
- Ensure professional development and support for teachers to help them identify students and implement strategies to ensure their education is enriched;
- Provide extra support for schools to provide gifted and talented programs and specialist programs among clusters such as performing arts or maths and science;
- Provide a grant to the Gifted and Talented parent network to assist them in their support for parents and families of high-achieving students; and
- Cover the costs of educational and psychological testing where there is an identified need to identify a student for early entry to preschool or kindergarten. Currently parents pay for this testing.

Innovation in ACT secondary schools

The ACT Labor Government supports our high schools and colleges and has fought strongly against attempts by the Liberal Party to introduce HSC style external examinations into the ACT. We are committed to continuing improvement in our secondary schools to ensure they are modern institutions geared toward helping students achieve excellence in their chosen pathways.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will:

- Establish an \$800,000 innovation fund that will provide resources to high school and college principals to help drive quality teaching practices and systems.

Revitalising School Sport and Physical Education

The ACT Labor Government recognises the importance of school sport and physical education in our schools, not only does it improve the health of students but research shows it also leads to improvements in educational outcomes.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will:

- Provide \$800,000 over four years to fund the SmartStart program, a school-based initiative designed to provide fitness programs for identified unhealthy children, and evaluate progress;
- Provide an additional \$300,000 over four years to support the important work of the Children's Physical Activity Foundation; and
- Continue with the annual Minister's Physical Activity Challenge to encourage students to be more physically active.

Fostering global citizens - improving language education

The ACT Labor Government believes that language education is an essential part of preparing our students for life in the 21st century. In the year 2010 it will be compulsory for all public schools to offer a language other than English program.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will invest \$209,000 to:

- Expand the links between schools and embassies for the delivery of languages and cultural education. It is envisaged there will be Memoranda of Understanding between schools and embassies covering all core languages; and
- Increase support for the Ethnic Schools Association in the form of a rental subsidy for their use of public schools after hours and on weekends.

Ensuring the best education in the early years

The ACT Labor Government is committed to providing children with the best start in life. We have a comprehensive early childhood education policy that has seen the inclusion of preschool in our curriculum framework and the establishment of four new early childhood schools in Lyons, Narrabundah, Isabella Plains and Scullin. These schools will provide state-of-the-art early childhood services and education for students aged 0-8 and their families.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will:

- Provide ongoing support for these new early childhood schools, including implementing 15 hours of free preschool in these schools from 2009;
- Extend the 15 free pre-school hours program to all Government pre-schools from 2010;
- Continue to highly value early childhood education, recognising the benefits to students and their families and to our commitment toward building a better city and a stronger community; and
- Secure land for new P-2 Early Childhood schools in Gungahlin and Molonglo. This commitment recognises the growing need of these new communities for early childhood education services.

Improved equity in education outcomes

ACT Labor wants all students, regardless of where they live or their social and economic circumstances, to have access to a high quality education. Labor believes that all students should have the opportunity to succeed.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will:

- Require all schools to develop action plans to reduce the achievement gap in their school;
- Continue funding for enhanced pastoral care, student welfare, behavioural and learning support; and
- Further develop educational engagement between parents and schools.

Promotion of public education

The ACT Labor Government believes strongly in the excellence of our public schools and we are committed to promoting our schools to the wider community. The Labor Government's *ACT Public Schools, So Much More to Offer* campaign has been successful in promoting our schools through TV, radio and print advertising as well as the internet over the past two years. The campaign has also utilised free media to boost the reputation of our public schools. In 2007, the first ever Step into the Limelight performance was initiated by the Government to promote the great work done in public schools in the area of the arts.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will:

- Continue to promote our public schools through free and paid media – particularly during peak enrolment periods and significant education weeks;
- Continue supporting *Step into the Limelight* to promote the performing arts and positive culture in our schools;
- Build capacity at the school and regional level for promotion, including support with website design and content and other promotional activities; and
- Continue to provide media and marketing support to schools.

Providing safe schools for everyone

The ACT Labor Government is committed to our schools being safe and secure places for everyone. In 2007 the Government introduced a suite of new behaviour management policies for ACT public schools under the *Providing Safe Schools* banner. We introduced new procedures for the management and reporting of critical incidents in schools as well as a Code of Conduct outlining appropriate behaviour while on school grounds. The Safe Schools Taskforce was established and members from the Government, P&C, principals, ACT Policing and the Preschool Society are meeting monthly to discuss issues in schools. These new policies have proven extremely successful in making our schools safer, with the number of critical incidents in our schools reducing significantly in the last year.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will:

- Continue to prioritise safety and security in our schools;
- Continue to support the work of the Safe Schools Taskforce;
- Continue to monitor and update our policies as needed; and
- Better support teachers and schools by developing the option for tougher suspensions for longer periods for misbehaving students.