

ANNUAL REPORT

2016

Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales





The Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales (P&C Federation) 2016 Annual Report is based on the financial year reporting period from 1 June 2015 to 31 May 2016.

CONTENTS

Message from the Minister for Education.....	1
Message from the Secretary for the NSW Department of Education	3
Report from the President.....	5
Finance Report.....	9
Board and Executive	13
Delegates by Electorate.....	13
Board Attendance.....	14
P&C Federation Representation on Committees and Groups.....	15



Message from the Minister for Education

Adrian Piccoli, Minister for Education

It's been another action-packed year in public education. NSW continues to lead the nation in implementing evidence-based education reforms to improve student results, support teachers and enhance teaching quality.

Parents play such a vital role in public education, I think what children learn at home is as important as their time in school. I would like to thank President, Jason Vials, and the Board and Executive for their efforts in re-establishing the Federation of Parents and Citizens Association of New South Wales and I look forward to our constructive relationship continuing.



Public schools are experiencing a once-in-a-generation spike in enrolments with an extra 40,000 students expected over the next four years. We've responded by announcing an allocation of nearly \$1 billion extra over the next four years to upgrade facilities and build more classrooms and schools.

We also announced a substantial boost to the maintenance program to keep our public schools in the best possible condition with \$330m in maintenance funding allocated to address priority needs in public schools over the next two years.

The NSW Government continues to support the Gonski funding reforms, standing by its commitment to fully fund its share of the six year Gonski Agreement. When I visit schools, I constantly hear inspiring stories about how this funding is making a difference in the schools that need it most.

Needs-based funding is continuing to support comprehensive NSW reforms in five key areas: quality teaching, quality learning, empowered school leadership, meeting student needs, and transparency and accountability.

We know that wellbeing contributes significantly to the learning and life outcomes of children and young people. We have invested in more support so that, for the first time, 50 primary schools will have a full-time school counselling position and the number of high schools with a full-time position will quadruple to almost 200.

In the best school systems in the world, the top teachers pass on their expertise to their colleagues and that helps lift teaching standards in every classroom.

This year the rollout of the \$224m Quality Teaching, Successful Students package ramped up. Every NSW public school with primary students now has an additional staffing resource allocation to ensure high-quality teaching and learning practices that better meet the full range of student needs.

For the first time in 17 years changes were announced to the HSC. These aim to improve the learning experience for students and boost the standard of NSW school graduates.

The implementation process will begin next year with Year 9 students. From 2020 students will need to demonstrate they have met a minimum standard in both literacy and numeracy to receive the HSC.

Next year, Year 9 students will have their first opportunity to show they have met the minimum standard required in literacy and numeracy when they sit their NAPLAN tests.

We also announced a new Science Extension course and encouragement for students to study Maths at the highest possible level. We're also changing assessments to reduce excessive student stress.

Better learning and improved student results are shared goals of the NSW Government, the Department of Education, the BOSTES and the P&C Federation. We know that students' academic results can be raised by having high student expectations and challenging pupils with relevant and engaging learning content.

I know I'm preaching to the choir, but I urge P&Cs Associations and parents generally to involve themselves as much as possible in their children's education. It's an essential ingredient if our students are to perform at their best.

I would like to thank all school P&C associations for their hard work and tireless engagement. Together with your school communities you achieve so much for both students and schools across the state.

Message from the Secretary for the NSW Department of Education

Peter Riordan, Acting Secretary

The Department of Education and the Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales share a commitment to quality education for each and every child attending a public school.

Both organisations care deeply about achieving the best educational and wellbeing outcomes for our children.

Our schools value parental involvement in children's learning and we are constantly working to improve the way we engage with parents.

We know from research that positive parental involvement is a key factor in improving academic results, student wellbeing and productivity. Parents and families play a critical role in influencing children's education, both at school and in the home.

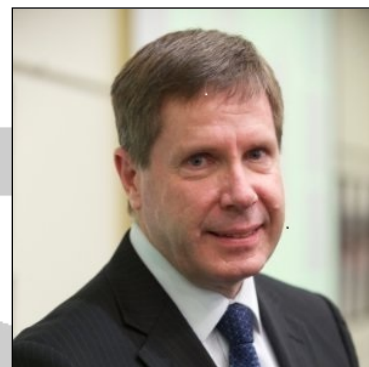
Academic attainment is higher when parents are effectively engaged in children's learning. Evidence shows, for example, that parents who read to young children can increase their child's reading and cognitive skills.

Parents can provide learning opportunities for children at home, and link those opportunities to what children learn at school and elsewhere. When schools, families and the community work together to support learning, children tend to do better at school and enjoy school more.

Developing a two-way relationship with parents is vital for establishing mutual trust, respect and a shared commitment to improving learning outcomes. Schools need to offer support to all parents and help them to become active participants in students' learning.

Clear and timely communication between schools and parents is crucial and we are actively working to improve the way our schools distribute information to parents about students' learning and development.

Through their school's P&C association many parents, carers and community members go beyond supporting their own children and work to support the school community as a whole. These generous volunteers are

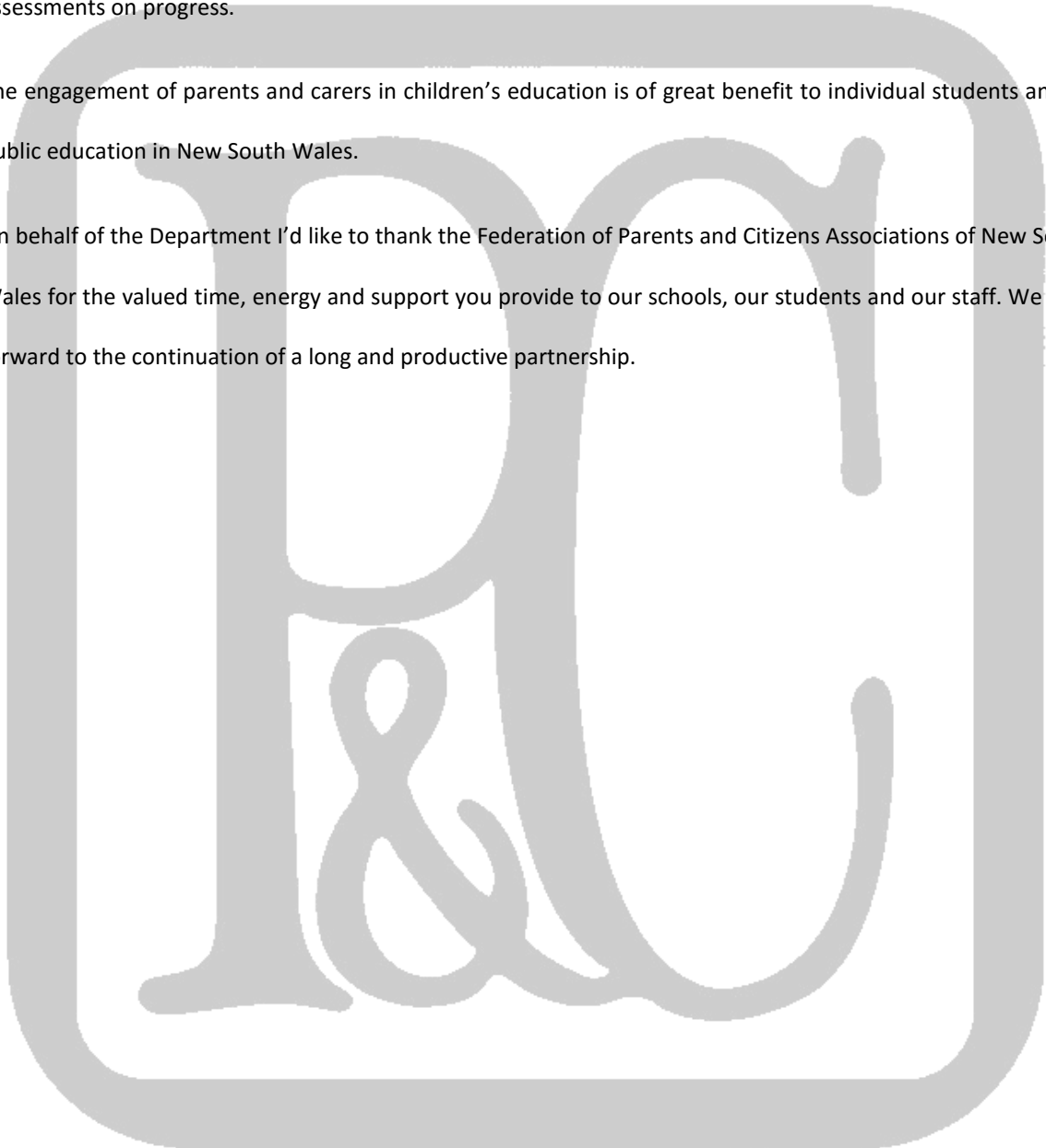


involved in fundraising, volunteering in the canteen, helping with class reading groups or assisting with sporting carnivals, open days and performance nights.

Parents also contribute their expertise to the development of school plans, working alongside principals and school staff to create a shared vision for schools, identifying strategic directions, improvement measures and assessments on progress.

The engagement of parents and carers in children's education is of great benefit to individual students and to public education in New South Wales.

On behalf of the Department I'd like to thank the Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales for the valued time, energy and support you provide to our schools, our students and our staff. We look forward to the continuation of a long and productive partnership.



REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jason Vials, President

It has been a privilege to be President of the Federation of P&C NSW for the last 18 months. P&C Federation has a long and proud history, and as an organisation, we have made great strides in moving on from the darker days of the recent past. I think it is worth looking back on what has been achieved over the first term of P&C Federation following the administration period.



The Minister appointed an administrator to P&C Federation following a period of significant infighting and instability. Our first job as the new Council was to start afresh, with a commitment from all councillors to work together for the benefit of public education in NSW.

The council set out a number of objectives:

- To re-establish strong working relationships with the key stakeholders in education in NSW
- To re-establish strong corporate governance
- To rebuild the financial position of the P&C Federation
- To improve the services to our members

I am pleased to say that these objectives have been achieved.

The P&C Federation has worked hard to rebuild strong relationships with the stakeholders of NSW.

The P&C Federation's return has been warmly welcomed by The Minister for Education, Adrian Piccoli, and the Department of Education. I would like to thank the Minister in particular for his support in restarting our advocacy process. Your councillors have made sure parent's views are heard on issues like curriculum through the Board of Studies and small school closures through parliamentary enquiries. We have taken up roles on all the key advisory boards of the Department of Education.

We have been working closely with the Primary and Secondary Principal Associations and Teachers Federation to achieve positive outcomes for education, with a particular focus being the need to achieve full implementation of the Gonski reforms.

We have re-joined the Australian Council of State School Organisations, and Terry Timms, one of our councillors, is representing NSW on that body.

Recently we worked with the parent bodies representing Catholic and Independent schools on a forum discussing collaboration between teachers, schools and parents. This forum was warmly received and hopefully will be the start of ongoing collaboration between parent bodies where our interests overlap.

Parent's voices need to be heard in discussions about education, and I believe we have made a good start in making those voices heard again.

The council identified improved governance as a key issue to try and make sure previous mistakes were not repeated.

The council, through the governance committee led by Tim Spencer, has written new policies and procedures to re-establish the rules and regulations any large body needs to work effectively. Hopefully the period prior to administration will never be repeated, and the new processes should work to ensure that.

The commitment all councillors made at the start of our term to work together has ensured we are able to present a united front on matters of importance for education in NSW.

Your P&C Federation inherited a difficult financial position when appointed in January 2015. Substantial funds had been expended during the dark times on legal and other costs, and the costs of the Administration had further eaten into reserves.

P&C Federation has negotiated new grants from the Department of Education, which will assist in servicing our members. Along with income from our insurance offering, this is the major revenue source for the P&C Federation. I would like to acknowledge our Vice President, Alan Gardiner's efforts in getting this important area back on track.

Members will be aware that during this Council's administration, a decision was made to sell the Granville property owned by the P&C Federation. Due to the forethought of earlier councils, the sale of this asset will mean that once our new home is purchased, the P&C Federation will be in a strong financial position. By investing some of the proceeds in income earning assets, P&C Federation will now have additional resources to provide better services for our members.

I acknowledge that improving services to our members is a constant and ongoing process. During our period in office, we have made some important improvements to the service offering to members.

The P&C Federation's General Manager, Steve Carpenter, and his staff have supported the new Council admirably. Steve, in particular, has put in an enormous effort, and I would like to thank him for his unstinting work, positive attitude and commitment to getting the new P&C Federation working.

We have been able to substantially improve the insurance offering to our members. In this increasingly litigious world, P&C Federation is committed to ensuring, as much as possible, that members are protected. Linking public liability cover to our membership fees ensures that all member P&C have this important cover to protect them in the case of a claim.

We have held over 25 forums around the state of NSW. Our current round is aiming to enable and enlighten our members. There has been a mixed level of interest – and this remains one of our main focuses – how to reach more of our members with better information and services.

Much remains to be done, including a review of the Constitution, however I believe that we have made a good start on P&C Federation 2.0, and have every confidence that this progress will continue under the new leadership team.

I would like to thank all Council members for their enormous efforts on behalf of parents and students of NSW. The commitment to become a councillor under the new structure is a big one, and I congratulate everyone on putting up their hand on behalf of public education in NSW. Everything that has been achieved has been as a result of the efforts of all councillors working together.

Fortunately, many of our councillors are standing again, with an infusion of new blood to continue to build on the work of our retiring Council. I congratulate all new councillors and delegates on their election. It has been

an honour to act as President of the Federation, and I take this opportunity to wish the new Council well as they continue the P&C Federation's long standing role of working for the betterment of students in public education in NSW.



FINANCE REPORT

Sale of Granville Property

The P&C Federation sold its property at Granville in December 2015, for \$4,020,000 (excluding GST). Half of the sale price was paid immediately and the remainder will be received in December 2016 (and secured by a bank guarantee until then). The sale price was twice the current valuation of the Granville property and was achieved due to the property being sold to a neighbouring property owner to whom the property is worth far more once consolidated with the neighbouring property as a development site.

The proceeds of the property sale will be used to acquire new, smaller and more suitable premises for the P&C Federation and also provide a source of investment income. A search for suitable new premises is under way and the Granville property is being leased back from the new owner while this occurs.

Federation Cash Position

The proceeds from the sale of the Granville property have transformed P&C Federation's cash position, and removed any immediate cash flow issues.

However, if the property sale proceeds are excluded, P&C Federation continues to suffer from the decline in cash reserves experienced over the last few years. While the cash on hand as at May 2016 was very healthy at approximately \$2,280,000, excluding the proceeds of the property sale reduces the cash on hand to about \$80,000, compared to \$290,000 as at May 2015 (itself down from \$425,000 as at May 2014). Note that the balance as at May generally represents the low point of the P&C Federation's annual cash cycle, as it immediately precedes the influx of membership renewals for the following membership year.

Rebuilding the cash reserves of the P&C Federation will require a sustained period of annual cash surpluses and, until then, there will be some reliance on the availability of a portion of the proceeds of the Granville property sale to overcome potential cash shortfalls through the P&C Federation's annual cash cycle.

Department of Education Grant

The Department of Education grant for 2015-2016 was \$367,770 (excluding GST), a 2.5% increase over the prior year.

The Department of Education grant for 2014-2015 was not fully expended during that year and a portion, approximately \$275,000, was carried over as income of the current year.

In the current year, the Department's grant was not received until late February 2016. This was unexpectedly late and resulted in a significant portion of the grant being unspent as at the May 2016 end of the P&C Federation financial year. As a result, approximately \$270,000 of the 2015-2016 grant will be carried over as income to the following financial year.

The net result of the above income deferrals is that the Departmental grant income attributed to P&C Federation's 2015-2016 year roughly matches the Departmental grant for the year, and was a substantial increase over the Departmental grant income attributed to the prior year (\$84,000).

Results for 2015-2016 Year

A large net surplus of approximately \$2.25 m was recorded for the 2015-2016 year, compared to \$115,000 in the prior year. However, the surpluses for both years were inflated by the impact of either a property sale or property revaluation. Removing the net gain on the property sale in the 2015-2016 year (approximately \$2 m) and the gain on property revaluation in the 2014-2015 year (\$371,000) produces an underlying result of a surplus of \$213,000 for 2015-2016 and a loss of \$257,000 for 2014-2015.

The underlying surplus for 2015-2016 is a welcome development. This is only the second underlying annual surplus (ie, after ignoring gains due to property revaluations or sale) in the past seven years.

A significant contributor to the turnaround in the underlying surplus/deficit was the reduction in employee costs, which were reduced to \$435,000 in 2015-2016, down from \$628,000 in 2014-2015 (these costs being unusually high during the Administration period). The 2015-2016 employee costs were also lower than the

corresponding \$478,000 recorded in the 2013-2014 year and lower than any of the last eight years apart from 2010.

The other very large contributor to the turnaround stems from the timing of recognition of the income from successive Department of Education grants, as described earlier. As a result, the grant income attributed to 2015-2016 was \$375,000, substantially more than the \$84,000 attributed to 2014-2015.

The large gain on the sale of the Granville property together with the current year's underlying surplus has dramatically increased P&C Federation's net assets from \$1.8m as at May 2015 (ie, less than the then-estimated \$2m value of the Granville property) to over \$4m as at May 2016.

Current Assets vs Current Liabilities

As at May 2016, P&C Federation's current assets of \$4,557,000 comfortably exceeded its current liabilities of \$494,000. However, if the contribution from the sale of the Granville property is excluded, the P&C Federation's net assets would have been approximately \$335,000, significantly less than the corresponding current liabilities. If the proceeds of the Granville property had not been available, this would normally have represented a significant threat to the organisation's ability to continue as a going concern. However, there are two alleviating factors, in that included within P&C Federation's current liabilities as at May 2016 are:

- \$268,000 of 'deferred government grants' (\$275,000 as at May 2015), which represented government grants received but not yet expended as at May 2016, and for which P&C Federation has a clear claim given that P&C Federation will continue grant-related activities over the remainder of calendar 2016 with little likelihood of needing to repay the grant.
- \$103,000 of 'deferred revenue' (\$152,000 as at May 2015), which represents membership fees collected in respect of P&C Federation membership year which straddles but ends after the May 2016 date of the 2016 Financial Statements and for which there is no likelihood of needing to pay to an external party.

Excluding these two items reduces the current liabilities to approximately \$122,000, comfortably less than non-property-sale-related current assets of \$335,000.

Federation Membership Fees for 2016-2017

The Board has proposed that P&C Federation membership fees for the 2016-2017 year be set at the same amounts as for the prior year, unchanged since 2013-2014. Prior to that, the membership fees had risen by about 2.5% in 2013-2014 and between 5% and 6% in each of 2012-2013 and 2011-2012.

The decision to set the membership fees at the proposed level is subject to endorsement at the AGM, as specified in section 5(c) of P&C Federation constitution.

Pleasingly, P&C Federation membership numbers have recovered from the net reduction of about eighty P&Cs experienced in the 2014-2015 year, and have returned to approximately 1,900 P&C Associations, consistent with 2013-2014 and earlier years.

Alan Gardiner

Vice President

BOARD AND EXECUTIVE

PRESIDENT

Jason Vials

VICE PRESIDENT

Alan Gardiner

SECRETARY

Susan Boyd

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Christine Cameron

Tim Spencer

Kathleen Styant

Terry Timms

DELEGATES BY ELECTORATE

CENTRAL COAST

Craig Kettle

Nicole Mottlee

FAR WEST

Donna Ambler

Bob Dyson

HUNTER

Nicholas Adam

Vacant

MACARTHUR

Ray Mosley

Paul Sabatier

MID NORTH COAST

Tracy Hunt

Jason Ryan

NEW ENGLAND

John Rosberg

Rachael Sowden

NORTH COAST

Sharon Bright

Lisa Naumovski

NORTH SYDNEY

Mishell Currie

Mark Van Kerkwijk

NORTH WEST SYDNEY

BOARD MEMBERS

Natasha Coster

Roslyn Deal

Angela Martin

Joel Matthews

Tammy Moussa (appointed 06/08/2015)

Samantha Pearce (appointed 19/06/2015)

Samantha Rudd

Carla Stacey (resigned 18/06/2015)

Natalie Walker

Yve Weinmann

Jason Yeo (resigned 03/08/2015)

Veryan McAllister

Lisa Wilmhurst

RIVERINA

Jane Paterson

Vacant

SOUTH COAST

Rob Ingram

Mihyun Lim

SOUTH WEST SYDNEY

Natalie Frolov

Mihyun Lim

SOUTHERN CENTRAL TABLELANDS

Kym Bush

Bryce Wilson

SOUTHERN SYDNEY

Vacant

Vacant

SYDNEY

Stephen Jackson

Kelly Kershaw

WEST SYDNEY

Tania Bailey

Kirsten Boerst (Resigned 08/02/2016)

BOARD ATTENDANCE

Name	Position	Board Meeting					Executive Meetings				
		No. Meetings	Attended	Apologies	Leave	Absent	No. Meetings	Attended	Apologies	Leave	Absent
Alan Gardiner	Vice President	7	7				4	4			
Angela Martin	Councillor	7	6			1					
Carla Stacey**	Councillor	0									
Christine Cameron	Executive Councillor	7	4	3			4	2	2		
Jason Vials	President	7	7				4	3	1		
Jason Yeo**	Councillor	2	2								
Joel Matthews	Councillor	7	5	2							
Kathleen Styant	Executive Councillor	7	3	4			4	4			
Natalie Walker	Councillor	7	7								
Natasha Coster	Councillor	7	7								
Roslyn Deal	Councillor	7	5	2							
Samantha Pearce	Councillor	7	2	4		1					
Samantha Rudd	Councillor	7	6	1							
Susie Boyd	Secretary	7	6	1			4	2	2		
Tammy Moussa**	Councillor	5	2	3							
Terry Timms	Executive Councillor	7	7				4	4			
Tim Spencer	Executive Councillor	7	6	1			4	4			
Yve Weinmann	Councillor	7	7								

**Not eligible to attend all meetings

P&C FEDERATION REPRESENTATION ON COMMITTEES AND GROUPS

Members of the Management Board have been elected to positions on various committees' and panels including but not limited to those named below, generally each of the committee's meet once a term.

Australian Council of State School Organisations:

The Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) was formed in 1947 as a national parent organisation developing and advocating educational policies in the interests of its affiliates at the national level. As the peak national body for State/Public Education ACSSO represents the interests of the students attending public Schools, their parents and the school communities they belong to.

Our Board made the decision to re-affiliate with ACSSO at our August 2015 Board Meeting and Terry Timms was elected as the P&C Federation representative late in 2015. The formal structure of ACSSO was in a process of transition when we joined the peak government school parent bodies from ACT, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria. ACSSO Incorporated was also transitioning into ACSSO Limited requiring ASIC registration with state representative transitioning into Directors under the new structure. The budget for ACSSO is provided by the affiliation fees of members and a service provider contract with the Department of Education and Training that provides Commonwealth funding.

Membership and participation in ACSSO provides the NSW P&C Federation with an opportunity to have a voice in the national educational agenda and to keep abreast of the issues and agendas across the nation. It is important that we have an overview and understanding of State and Territory governance practices and consultative decision making across Australia – Local Schools Local Decision is the NSW version of the national move towards more autonomous schools. Our

understanding of what parent engagement actually means in each State and Territory can inform our decisions and strategies in NSW.

ACSSO channelled the priorities of the members to develop and articulate an election strategy in the last Federal Election. The strategy called for Fair Simple and Transparent (FST) educational funding from the Federal Government – funding that would provide equitable educational outcomes for all students and support and promote parental partnership and engagement in our schools.

ACSSO also successfully prepared a submission to the Senate Select Committee on School Funding investment inquiring into the impact of reduced Commonwealth Funding for State and Territory provided Schools.

Terry Timms, NSW Director, ACSSO

Assisted School Travel Program – Appeals Panel

This Committee assesses appeals for transport assistance where the initial application has been denied by the Department of Education, NSW.

Australian Government Black Spot Program

Angela Martin, Councillor for New England, is currently serving on the Australian Government Black Spot Programme (2016-17) NSW Consultative Panel. The Panel helps guide the appropriation of funding towards road projects within NSW that are identified by Roads and Maritime Services (RMS), as being high priority for public works, due to their BCR - Benefit Cost Ratio, which is calculated using a methodology that applies past crash statistics including severity of crashes. The other nominations that go before the panel are project proposals accompanied by a Road Safety Audit. The panel comprises members of Institute of Public Works Engineers Australia (IPWEA) - Mr David Niven, Mike Cush (RMS), members of local government (ALGSA) - Mr Richard Connors, and John Cobb, MP, member for Calare. A representative of NRMA and NSW Police also serve on the Black Spot

Programme Panel. Secretariat being provided by Mary Whalan of RMS - Principal Manager, Road Safety Coordination.

Recent highlights of the panel include the recommendation of a funding split between urban and rural projects of 68 percent rural, 32 percent urban for the 2016/17 funding round, which will total \$53m in road works.

The Eligibility criteria for proposals has been broadened to allow local communities to nominate projects for 2016/17, that will allow the proactive remediation of unsafe roads.

Angela Martin has enjoyed the opportunity to represent the community on this panel, as she has written letters on other occasions to the Minister for Transport, NSW, regarding school bus safety and rural and regional roads.

BOSTES NSW Vocational Education and Training Advisory Committee

The VET Advisory Committee (VETAC) advises BOSTES on matters relating to vocational education and training (VET), including the development of VET courses as part of the Higher School Certificate. This committee ensures that there is a consistent approach across VET curriculum frameworks. For NSW the BOSTES have 13 Industry Curriculum Framework documents that contain HSC VET courses, which are to be delivered by schools, TAFE NSW or other registered training organisations (RTO's). These include: Automotive, Business Services, Construction, Electrotechnology, Entertainment Industry, Financial Services, Hospitality, Human Services, Information and Digital Technology, Metal and Engineering, Primary industries, Retail Industry and Tourism, Travel and Events.

Over the last twelve months many changes have occurred in the VET sector, with the Australian Government introducing a new model for engaging Australian Industry in the development of training products that will guide the delivery of vocational education and training (VET). This has led to BOSTES having to revise and update Frameworks for HSC students to align with any new changes made to training packages. Frameworks that have been recently revised or updated include Business

Services, Entertainment Industry, Financial Services, Human Service and Information and Digital Technology. Board endorsed VET course descriptors are continually updated annually for both Stage 5 and Stage 6 and are available on the BOSTES website. There are approximately 109 Stage 6 VET Board endorsed courses for 2016 and 12 stage 5 VET Board endorsed courses for 2016.

VET in schools is an important part of our children's educational journey that not only allows students to prepare for future educational opportunities, it also supports developing employability skills and training in various employment pathways to better support students in their post school future. BOSTES are committed to ensuring that the Industry Curriculum Frameworks that contain HSC VET courses provided in schools is of a high quality to support all students.

Natalie Walker, Far West Councillor

BOSTES Primary Curriculum Committee

The Primary Curriculum Committee advises BOSTES on strategic issues relating to primary education, including the links between the formal school curriculum and early childhood and the promotion of continuity from Kindergarten to Year 12. It consists of BOSTES members and additional persons with expertise in primary education.

Connected Communities Steering Committee

Connected Communities Steering Committee provides advice to the Secretary, from their respective representative bodies, on the implementation of the Connected Communities Strategy.

Ethnic Community Council

As the peak body for all culturally and linguistically diverse communities in NSW, the Ethnic Community Council (ECC) undertakes a range of activities, including government-funded projects, to fulfil their constitutional objectives.

Great Teaching Inspired Learning Steering Committee

The Great Teaching Inspired Learning Steering Committee (GTIL) reviews the implementation of the GTIL program within the Department of Education. This program includes a set of initiatives focused on improving teacher quality through improved entry standards, training, mentoring, supervision and professional development. The committee is chaired by the Secretary of the DoE and brings together public education stakeholders including representatives of teachers, primary and secondary school principals and public school parents.

LSLD Implementation Advisory Group

Key role in ensuring stakeholders are well informed of the progress on the LSLD reform agenda, including key projects such as RAM. Stakeholders will also have a process to provide input.

Secretary's Multicultural Education Advisory Group

The Secretary's Multicultural Education Advisory Group (MEAG) was established as a key forum for the Department to consult with representatives of key stakeholder groups on significant matters relating to education and training in a culturally diverse society. MEAG provides advice to the Secretary on:

- emerging issues relating to multiculturalism and learning in a culturally diverse society
- services, communication and consultation strategies
- pedagogy, curriculum, teaching skills, qualifications and training for quality teaching
- evaluation and accountability mechanisms for improvement and quality program outcomes.

Learning Difficulties Committee

The Learning Difficulties Committee (LDC) is a coalition of individuals and parent support groups which provides support and information about children with learning difficulties and related

conditions. The first learning difficulties support group was established in 1983 to address the needs of children with learning difficulties/learning disabilities and/or attention difficulties, and their families and to create an information network with teachers and other professionals. The success of the first group led to other local parent support groups being formed throughout NSW. The rapid growth of local groups created the need for a state body to support parent groups and assist in the establishment of new groups. The Learning Difficulties Coalition of NSW Inc. was formed in 1988.

Today the LDC is a coalition of parent group organisations representing learning difficulties, AD/HD, dyslexia, Tourette Syndrome, Autism and Aspergers Syndrome, Velo-Cardio-Facial Syndrome, Dyspraxia and Anxiety Disorders. Our support groups include Autism & Aspergers Support Group, R.A.I.S.E Network and Tourette Syndrome Association of Australia Inc.

Network of Community Activities – Out of School Hours Care

The Out of School Hours Care (OOSH) Reference Group, coordinated by Network of Community Activities, meets twice a term to discuss factors affecting the Out of School Hours Care industry sector. Members represent NSW regional and metropolitan Before and After School services and Vacation Care.

Schools Animal and Care Ethics Committee

The Schools Animal and Care Ethics Committee (SACEC) supervises the use of animals in teaching or research within all public and independent schools. SACEC interprets the Animal Research Act 1985 (NSW); publishes a list of approved animal activities; considers animal activity applications; monitors schools' animal activity compliance; liaises with teachers and other representatives; investigates animal ethics complaints and reports to school authorities.

SACEC is composed of at least two members from each category: A - Veterinarian, B - Teacher, C - Welfare and D: Independent Public. SACEC currently provides feedback to a proposed NSW DPI Department of Primary Industries (DPI) biosecurity checklist relating to the Livestock Production

Assurance (LPA) and National Vendor Declaration (NVD) programs. SACEC conducts regular school visit programs in rotating metropolitan and rural areas with the aim of discussion, evaluation, monitoring and provision of feedback to visited schools.

Schools Ethics Education Consultative Committee

Under the Education Act 1990, public schools provide the option of special education in ethics to students who are not attending special religious education. This is provided by authorised representatives of approved providers.

The role of the committee is to ensure transparent and open consultation with stakeholders.

Schools Religious Education Consultative Committee

Under the Education Act 1990, public schools provide special religious education. This is provided by authorised representatives of approved religious groups to students who have nominated that religion. Times for these classes are negotiated with the school.

The role of the committee is to ensure transparent and open consultation with stakeholders.

Special Religious Education/Special Education in Ethics (SRE/SEE) Program Review Reference Group

The NSW Department of Education and Communities has commissioned an independent review of the implementation of Special Religious Education (SRE) and Special Education in Ethics (SEE) in NSW public schools.

The review is being conducted by an independent research company, ARTD Consultants. It will inform ongoing improvement of SRE and SEE for the Department and providers.

The role of the reference group is for ARTD Consultants to interact with stakeholders.