

Elizabeth Lee MLA

Leader of the Opposition
Shadow Minister for Education
Member for Kurrajong

Under Embargo until Wednesday 21 August 2024

Media Release

Wednesday 21 August 2024

Canberra Liberals outline clear education plan to better support students, teachers and parents

Opposition Leader and Shadow Minister for Education Elizabeth Lee has today announced a Canberra Liberals Government will **fully fund and implement an evidence-driven plan to improve literacy and numeracy in the ACT which includes year 1 screening, small group intervention and supports for those students who need it and strengthened regular monitoring of progress across all years.**

The Canberra Liberals will deliver real and tangible measures to put teachers at the forefront of our education system by **lowering the administrative burden and providing each ACT teacher with a \$200 voucher at the start of each school year to help with classroom supplies of their choosing and introduce access to an opt-in behaviour curriculum for students.**

A Canberra Liberals Government will also **boost the Asset Renewal Program with an additional \$25million to bring every government school up to minimum standards when it comes to heating, cooling, and toilets.**

Ms Lee said Canberra should have the best education system in the country with excellent teachers, well-funded schools, committed parents and an educated population but we are being let down by the Labor-Greens government.

“The Canberra Liberals have listened to the advice of teachers, parents, and education experts, and will deliver a clear plan to improve literacy and numeracy, better support our hardworking teachers and ensure all students have access to well maintained and safe learning environments,” Ms Lee said.

“The Education Minister and her Labor-Greens government have let down an entire generation of students by ignoring report after report from experts which raised the alarm that what this government was doing was not working when it comes to teaching literacy and numeracy.

“It is shameful that some ACT government schools are also lacking basic facilities like suitable toilets and adequate heating and cooling; the very basics that all Canberra parents should expect.

“For years, principals, teachers, and the Australian Education Union have raised significant concern about the unacceptably high levels of violence against our teachers, including our

principals, which ranks as one of the highest in the country. These concerns have largely been ignored by the Labor-Greens government.

“The problem is not a lack of funding with only Northern Territory spending more per student than the ACT; it is a Labor-Greens government that is tired, out of touch, and not meeting the needs and expectations of our students and hard-working teachers.”

In addition to the \$25million boost for upgrading heating, cooling, and toilets in our schools, a **Canberra Liberals Government will also prioritise finalising the development of the *Property Quality Standards*. Once completed, we will undertake a thorough audit of all ACT government schools against the PQS and deliver a systematic and transparent approach to maintenance and infrastructure upgrades for our schools.**

“This audit will identify gaps, future needs and funding requirements. It will ensure that a detailed schedule for retiring and replacing ageing infrastructure assets is maintained and will facilitate the development of a rolling program of building maintenance.

“The Canberra Liberals support choice when it comes to education and we value the important role that our Catholic and independent schools have in our community. A Canberra Liberals Government will continue to work with these sectors to ensure that all Canberra students have access to a great education, no matter which school they choose.”

Ms Lee also reiterated that the Canberra Liberals are the only party that can be trusted to fully implement all the recommendations from the expert panel of the recent inquiry into literacy and numeracy. It was clear from this year’s budget and answers provided in estimates that the Labor-Greens’ government’s agreement “in principle” to the independent review is not backed up with sufficient funding, or a tangible implementation plan.

Note: The 2024-2025 ACT budget commits \$24.9m with only \$1.7m in new funding for the ‘Strong Foundations’ program.

Media contact: **Dean Croker** M 0434 631 511 E dean.croker@parliament.act.gov.au