

A **fresh** opportunity for Canberra

A Canberra Liberals Government will:

Build an education system that is better for students, better for teachers



Canberra should have the best education system is Australia.

We have excellent teachers, well-funded schools, committed parents and an educated population.

But the Labor-Greens government is failing us.

In the ACT, according to NAPLAN results, around a third of all children are falling below the new NAPLAN proficiency standards.

Our schools are lacking in basic facilities, like suitable toilets, engaging learning spaces, and adequate heating and cooling.

And, sadly, the ACT has the highest rate of violence against principals – with three-quarters of our principals experiencing physical violence.

The problems are not caused by a lack of funding – only the NT spends more money per student than the ACT – but a lack of will and a misguided direction from the Labor-Greens government.

Our policies are based on the best available advice from educational experts. We have consulted widely with teachers, parents, academics, and researchers, to build an education system better for students and better for teachers.

The Canberra Liberals' education policy prioritises improved literacy and numeracy, better support for our hard-working teachers, and ensures all students have access to a well-maintained and safe learning environment.

KEY MEASURES:

- ✓ Fully funded and fully implemented evidence-based approach to literacy and numeracy
- ✓ Literacy and numeracy screening and monitoring programs
- ✓ Intervention and support for those students who need it
- ✓ Putting our teachers at the forefront of our education system
- ✓ Introduction of a behaviour curriculum for students
- ✓ Better managed school maintenance
- ✓ Better planning of school infrastructure to meet the needs of our growing city



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Better for students, better for teachers



We owe it to our children to give them the best possible start in life. And there is no greater investment that we can make in their future, than to give them a high-quality education.

Yet for the past 20 years, the Labor-Greens government has ignored the advice from experts on the positive impact of explicit teaching on student learning outcomes. Most recently the ACT Literacy and Numeracy Expert Panel found that the current system was failing our children and called for a return to 'explicit teaching'.

The Canberra Liberals have listened to the experts, and have crafted our policies to deliver real, positive results for students.

At the heart of it is moving towards explicit teaching practices. The evidence from Australia, and around the world, is that this is the most effective way of teaching students. We will implement and fund a return to core principles in teaching, and we will do so as a top priority of an incoming Liberal Government.

Combined with this, we will implement a program of screening and monitoring literacy and numeracy - because if we don't know a student is falling behind, how can we help them?

Screening not only ensures that a student's progress is being monitored but can identify gaps in a student's needs. At the current time, there is a key gap in the ACT, due to the lack of a Year 1 Phonics Check. Canberra students miss out on this vital, but easy to implement, tool. We will mandate its use, and also fund a pilot program for a Year 1 numeracy check and commit to publish territory wide data to ensure transparent reporting.

But we cannot stop there. We will improve screening and monitoring across all years, from Kindergarten to Year 12.

With that data in hand we can then move onto helping students where they need it most. Quality classroom teaching is designed to meet the needs of students - academic, social, emotional, and behavioural. But for one in eight students, focussed intervention is required. And for about 5% of students, one-on-one or small group support from an expert is needed.

The Canberra Liberals will commit to building the necessary multi-tiered system of supports for ACT Government schools and implementing effective 'catch-up' programs for those in Years 11-12 who have been let down by the current system.

Our teachers are the backbone of our education system and helping them is a key component of

the Canberra Liberals policy. We will lower the administrative burden on teachers and get them back where they want to be - in front of students in the classroom, not filling out forms.

ACT teachers will remain the highest-paid in the country. They will be supported with effective professional development in the move towards an evidence-driven approach to teaching literacy and numeracy. We will provide them with a \$200 voucher at the start of each year for their out-of-pocket expenses in creating creative and well-resourced classrooms and we will work with our two main teaching universities to ensure their curricula reflects a focus on evidence-based training.

Nobody learns well in an unruly classroom. Australia is among the worst in the world for class discipline, and a recent report showed that the biggest OH&S risk to ACT teachers was verbal and physical abuse from students and parents. This must change.

We will work with schools to access pilot programs which will seek to change the culture of disruptive behaviour and support teachers in dealing with problematic behaviours.

Our students and teachers deserve high quality facilities, irrespective of where they live. Schools are often the hearts of our communities in the ACT, but Labor closed 23 schools and has underfunded many others. Repairs and maintenance are ad hoc and reactive. Many toilet blocks are not fit-for-purpose, and heating and cooling is a long-standing issue for students, teachers and parents.

The Canberra Liberals will audit all school infrastructure and deliver a progressive and transparent policy of rolling building maintenance and improvements.

We will also prioritise planning for new schools in growth areas, ensuring children have access to a school close to where they live.

We believe that talking with parents and carers about decisions impacting their children, and their school community is a crucial aspect of fostering an inclusive and supportive educational environment. Engagement with families meaningfully allows us to better understand the needs, expectations, and concerns of the community.

We will commit to open and transparent consultation with parents and the broader school community to ensure a collaborative approach that will enhance outcomes for students and create a greater sense of community.



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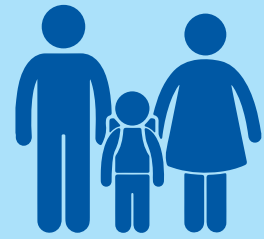
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A Canberra Liberals Government will:

Support education choice for families



Canberra families deserve to have a genuine choice when it comes to seeking out the best education for their children.

The Canberra Liberals believe in a strong government education system and a strong non-government education system. We believe that all our schools should have suitable amenities, and suitable opportunities to develop and grow.

Our policies are based on the best available advice from educational experts. We have consulted widely with teachers, parents, academics, and researchers, to build an education system better for students and better for teachers. The Canberra Liberals will always support choice in education for families.

KEY MEASURES:

- ✔ An open and transparent process for allocating land for non-government schools in new planned and developed greenfield areas
- ✔ Stocktake of available land in Molonglo and Gungahlin for non-government schools
- ✔ Better funding for capital infrastructure by extending the 'Better Schools for Our Kids' program to \$5m per year
- ✔ Extending the 'Healthcare Access at School' program to non-government students
- ✔ Guaranteed funding for non-government early childhood education



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Supporting education choice for families



Non-government schools play an important role in providing education for Canberra families. There are over 30,000 students enrolled in non-government schools in the ACT, with enrolments consistently increasing.

The Canberra Liberals are committed to supporting the non-government school sector to ensure parents and carers have real choice when it comes to what works best for their child.

Non-government schools have struggled to obtain appropriate land to meet growing demand in newer suburbs.

The Canberra Liberals will commit to an open and transparent process to include options to allocate suitable land for non-government schools all new planned and developed greenfield areas.

In addition, we will undertake a stocktake of available land in the growth areas of Molonglo and Gungahlin to assess the availability of suitable land for further non-government schools as a priority.

The Canberra Liberals recognise the need for our non-government schools to have access to funding to improve capital infrastructure. We also know that construction costs have increased significantly over the last few years.

To address these issues, a Canberra Liberals government will support the non-government school sector by increasing the “Better Schools for Our Kids: Non-Government School Infrastructure Upgrades Program (BSK)” grant funding to a total of \$5 million per year and extend the funding out to the end of the forward estimates.

This will provide certainty and allow non-government schools to better plan for vital upgrades.

All children in the ACT have a right to access education, including those students with complex health care needs.

Currently only students in ACT Governments schools have access to the Healthcare Access at School (HAAS) Program, which is a program where a registered nurse provides training for school-based staff to ensure they are adequately trained to manage the health needs of those students with complex needs.

The Canberra Liberals will extend the HAAS program to make it available to students in all non-government schools in the ACT.

This will ensure that all ACT students and their families have the same access to this critical service, no matter what school they attend.

The Canberra Liberals believe that all children should have access to high quality early childhood education. It plays a critical role in supporting our children in their learning and helps develop their social and emotional skills as well as getting them ready for school.

We believe that choice for families should include choice in early childhood education. Therefore, the Canberra Liberals will commit to maintaining funding to the non-government school sector for three and four year old early learning.

A Canberra Liberals government will always support choice in education for families.



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