

National School Reform Agreement

**Australian Capital Territory Bilateral Agreement:
2021 Progress Report**

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – ACT – 2021

Executive Summary

The ACT remains committed to driving reform to improve learning outcomes for all children and young Australians as their guiding principle and places a sense of urgency to the task. This commitment is outlined in the ACT Government's *Future of Education Strategy* and *Set Up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT*. These strategies are focused on investing in and providing a system that supports student agency, inclusion, equity and access to high quality education for every child and young person. This will ensure all children and young people, regardless of background, have an educational experience of the highest quality that meets their needs, motivations and aspirations.

ACT Public Schools, Catholic Education and Independent Schools made considerable progress in 2021 against identified priority actions of the National School Reform Agreement despite the interruption of COVID-19. Our actions are driven by a commitment to the Alice Springs Mparntwe Declaration – 'Our vision is for a world class education system that encourages and supports every student to be the very best they can be' by ensuring that every child and young person has access to a great education and the life opportunities that this affords them.

The ACT continues its focus on three areas of quality teaching: initial teacher education; curriculum; and assessment, cognisant that quality teaching is the most important in-school factor in determining student performance. Initial Teacher Education (ITE) continues to be a high priority of the Teacher Quality Institute (TQI), which engages rigorously in the national ITE standards agenda. In 2021, this included participation in national ITE accreditation standards setting workshops and the national review of ITE program accreditation guidelines and procedures.

The ACT has a comprehensive approach to teacher professional learning, particularly focused on the Australian Curriculum. This is supported with high quality teacher professional development targeting the interconnectedness between curriculum, assessment and reporting. The ACT remains at the fore of national work on Learning Progressions and Online Formative Assessment. ACT teachers from all three sectors are members of the National Teacher Practice Reference Group. ACT teachers use formative assessment on a daily/weekly basis to assess student learning and identify required instruction and support. Putting student data at the teachers' fingertips empowers teachers to personalise learning plans and address areas for further growth.

The ACT Board of Secondary Studies (BSSS) also maintains a strong partnership across the three schooling sectors. Through a five-year review cycle, they develop or replace courses (within the current review cycle, 105 courses have been accredited) to ensure they are contemporary and underpinned by the Australian Curriculum. ACT Public, Catholic and Independent Schools, the BSSS and TQI, are collectively committed to ensuring a world class education for every child and young person in the ACT.

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – ACT – 2021

Progress Against Each Reform Direction

Reform Direction A – Support students, student learning and achievement

| Actions | Sector(s) | Timing | Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions) |
|---|-----------|--------|---|
| Develop a cross-sectoral implementation plan to underpin the ACT Government's Future of Education Strategy. | All | 2019 | Completed in 2019. Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A Catholic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A Independent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A |
| Implement stage one of the cross-sectoral Future of Education implementation plan. | All | 2020 | Completed in 2020 Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed. Phase One of the Future of Education was finalised and evaluated to inform Phase Two. |

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – ACT – 2021

| Actions | Sector(s) | Timing | Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions) |
|--|------------|-------------|---|
| | | | <p>The Future of Education Phase Two Implementation Plan has now commenced with ongoing cross sectoral collaboration.</p> <p>Catholic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication at a senior level is ongoing related to cross sectoral issues, for example, staffing shortages in the ACT, COVID responses. <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Independent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing regular meetings between senior officials has allowed significant collaboration in particular around managing Covid and legislation reform. |
| <p>Establish a cross-sectoral reform forum to share progress and challenges.</p> | <p>All</p> | <p>2019</p> | <p>Completed in 2019.</p> <p>Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A <p>Catholic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A <p>Independent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A |

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – ACT – 2021

| Actions | Sector(s) | Timing | Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions) |
|--|-----------|--------|--|
| Deliver professional learning on the Australian Curriculum General Capabilities. | All | 2019 | <p>Completed in 2019.</p> <p>Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2021, 123 teachers engaged in face-to-face professional learning workshops on the Australian Curriculum General Capabilities. • ACT Education Directorate staff were active representatives during the Australian Curriculum review process. Feedback was provided on the five general capabilities included in the review, in particular how they connect to the content of the Australian Curriculum learning areas. Consideration was also given to the structure and how the descriptions in each general capability align to the developmental expectations of students across the years of schooling. Changes in Version 9.0 of the Australian Curriculum will be supported as part of future professional learning. • In 2021 the Finding the Balance Mathematics and Numeracy Improvement pilot was run. 70 school leaders and lead educators from 18 schools participated in the pilot. <p>Catholic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A <p>Independent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A |

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – ACT – 2021

| Actions | Sector(s) | Timing | Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions) |
|---|-----------|------------------|---|
| Develop and implement academic reporting explicitly aligned to Australian Curriculum achievement standards. | Gov | 2019 and ongoing | <p>Completed and ongoing</p> <p>Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic reporting in the ACT is explicitly aligned to the Achievement Standards. A new School Administration System (SAS) was introduced into ACT public schools in 2019. The reporting module captures reporting of student achievement against the Achievement Standards. |
| Build upon existing ACT Australian Curriculum assessment reform effort to play a lead role in national efforts to refine ACARA’s national learning progressions in literacy and numeracy. | All | 2019 | <p>Completed in 2019 and ongoing.</p> <p>Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2021, the ACT continued to deliver professional learning to support teachers in using the progressions (Version 2) as published on the Australian Curriculum website. 52 teachers participated in workshops about the National Literacy Learning Progression. <p>Catholic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A <p>Independent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A |

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – ACT – 2021

| Actions | Sector(s) | Timing | Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions) |
|--|-----------|------------------|---|
| Build upon existing ACT Australian Curriculum assessment reform effort to play a lead role in national efforts to develop the digital formative assessment proof of concept. | All | 2019 | <p>Completed in 2019.</p> <p>Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Discovery Phase (proof-of-concept) was completed in 2019. <p>Catholic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catholic Education has contributed to the Online Formative Assessment Initiative through National Representation. <p>Independent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AISACT continues to be involved in the Online Formative Assessment initiative (OFAI) through national consultation: participation with other AIS's and our national body ISA |
| Build upon existing ACT Australian Curriculum assessment reform effort to play a lead role in the development of national learning progressions in general capabilities. | All | 2020 and ongoing | <p>Completed in 2020.</p> <p>Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A <p>Catholic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A <p>Independent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A |

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – ACT – 2021

| Actions | Sector(s) | Timing | Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions) |
|--|-----------|------------------|--|
| Play a lead role in the refinement of the digital formative assessment tool, and implement relevant aspects as they become available. | All | 2020 and ongoing | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ACT continues to be actively involved in progressing the Online Formative Assessment initiative (OFAI) through participation on the cross-jurisdictional OFAI Beta Phase Board. The Alpha Finalisation and Beta Establishment phase (July 2021 – June 2022) of the Initiative is now complete. <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Catholic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catholic Education is engaged in exploration of the application of the Online Formative Assessment Initiative. <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Independent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AISACT has been engaged in ongoing sharing and conversations with ACARA. |
| Conduct a cross-sectoral STEM educators forum (STEMEd ACT) in partnership with a range of professional teacher associations and the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies. | All | 2019 | <p>Completed in 2019.</p> <p>Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ACT Education Directorate continues to promote STEM education in ACT public schools through the activities of the Academy of Future Skills. The Academy showcases expertise and |

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – ACT – 2021

| Actions | Sector(s) | Timing | Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions) |
|---|-----------|--------------|--|
| | | | <p>leading practice in STEM education and works closely with teachers to enhance STEM teaching through coaching and professional learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2021, 58 schools from the preschool to college sectors engaged with the Academy of Future Skills, this comprised of 2 preschools, 37 primary schools, 15 high schools and 4 colleges. A total of 233 teachers worked with Academy of Future Skills staff throughout 2021. <p>Catholic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A <p>Independent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A |
| Implement the Cultural Integrity Continuum and Toolkit in all ACT Public Schools. | Gov | 2018 onwards | <p>Implemented in 2018.</p> <p>Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2020, the Cultural Integrity Framework and Assessment Tool for School Leaders replaced the Cultural Integrity Continuum and Toolkit. Since 2020, the School Review process has included consideration of the Cultural Integrity Assessment Tool for School Leaders to assess progress and identify priorities for action. |

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – ACT – 2021

| Actions | Sector(s) | Timing | Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions) |
|---|-----------|------------------|---|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Directors of School Improvement discuss Cultural Integrity in their routine meetings with principals. • The ACT Education Directorate reports on the progress of Cultural Integrity in ACT public schools through its Annual Report and the Whole of Government ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement. |
| Implement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures enriched elaborations for Science as part of cross-sectoral curriculum effort. | All | 2019 and ongoing | Implemented in 2019. Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A Catholic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A Independent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A |
| Meeting the learning needs of students through more and expanded schools for Canberra’s growing suburbs. | Gov | 2019 and ongoing | Completed and ongoing. Government Major infrastructure and capital works projects undertaken during 2021 to modernise facilities and better meet the learning needs of communities included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Expansions design commenced for two schools. Five schools were in construction phase of the expansion program, four due for |

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – ACT – 2021

| Actions | Sector(s) | Timing | Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions) |
|---------|-----------|--------|--|
| | | | <p>completion in early 2022 and one due in 2023. This will modernise and increase student capacity by more than 1600 places.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 schools had Relocatable Learning Units placed on site during 2021, increasing student capacity by 750. • In late 2021, preparation for Relocatable Learning Unit placement began for a further 8 schools, increasing student capacity by 550, for delivery during 2022. • One new school was opened in early 2021, another completed during 2021 ready for term 1, 2022, and three other new schools are in master planning, design or early construction phases. • Feasibility studies are underway to inform options to expand at other existing schools and to identify new school sites across the ACT. |

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – ACT – 2021

Reform Direction B – Support teaching, school leadership and school improvement

| Actions | Sector(s) | Timing | Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions) |
|---|---|------------------|--|
| Actively contribute to the review of senior secondary education including, pathways to work, further education and training and prerequisites for university entry. | All (through the Board of Senior Secondary Studies) | 2019 | <p>Completed in 2020, in line with changes to the <i>National School Reform Agreement</i> milestones.</p> <p>Board of Senior Secondary Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A |
| Implement relevant findings of the review of senior secondary education. | All (through the Board of Senior Secondary Studies) | 2020 and ongoing | <p>Completed 2021</p> <p>Board of Senior Secondary Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The General Capabilities have been embedded in all Board courses. • The ACT Senior Secondary Certificate enables students by making provision for up to five years to qualify for this Certificate. A number of ACT colleges support extended packages. CIT (TAFE) and other education providers offer a range of targeted and inclusive options supported by Board policy. • Inclusive education is strengthened in the ACT through the further development of the university H course program and the continued embedding of the M classification in all courses. An H course enables senior secondary and University credit simultaneously and is a valuable extension opportunity and support for transition to the tertiary sector. The M classification tailors courses for students with mild to moderate intellectual disability. |

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – ACT – 2021

| Actions | Sector(s) | Timing | Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions) |
|---------|-----------|--------|--|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the BSSS Assessment and Certification System (ACS) supported student efficacy through providing greater operability and flexibility to schools in the provision of contemporary and accurate course information including learning goals, course content, and assessment information. • The ACT curriculum reform and renewal process includes the ongoing development of new or replacement courses within a review cycle, with the Australian Curriculum underpinning foundational design specifications across all Curriculum in 2021. Course development and accreditation occurred for 20 new courses of study. These courses were established in partnership with schools, external experts, industry, tertiary training, and education sectors to ensure that they are in step with the knowledge, skills and understanding required for successful schooling outcomes, and post school preparation and readiness. • As of 2021, 26 school-based industry course options were supported by the BSSS as part of a suite of contemporary courses integrating nationally recognised vocational competencies, with ongoing review of the curriculum to maintain operability with training package requirements. • The ACT Senior Secondary Certificate incorporates opportunities for substantial recognition of formal external vocational training including School Based Apprenticeships to further support students and other training provided by external RTOs. |

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – ACT – 2021

| Actions | Sector(s) | Timing | Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions) |
|---------|-----------|--------|---|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeting contemporary issues such as systemic communications, equity and inclusion, and student experience in the COVID-19 world the BSSS Student Forum gave a voice to young people during their senior secondary education. Year 11 and 12 students from participating colleges joined the forum taking on a leadership role within the ACT, contributing their ideas and experiences in support of the future direction of senior secondary education and the provisions of the Board. <p>Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government has been engaged in ongoing sharing and conversations with the BSSS. • VET in ACT Public Schools Project 2021 work on VET in ACT Public Schools Project identified the need for a larger scale project that considered both Career Education and Transitions in ACT schools with a view to the Directorate establishing a new Student Pathways Reform Project in 2022. This project aims to deliver a Career Education Strategy, a Transitions Framework, and a VET Implementation Plan. • Review of the Transitions and Careers Officers Planning for The Student Pathways Reform project to be established by the Directorate in 2022 took place in 2021. The project will include a full review of the Transitions and Careers Officers roles in ACT Colleges, as well as career services being delivered in ACT high schools. |

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – ACT – 2021

| Actions | Sector(s) | Timing | Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions) |
|---|---|--------|---|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot program in collaboration with ACT Office for Women and the National Association of Women in Construction The Understanding the Building and Construction Pilot Program (UBCPP) work commenced in 2021 with four schools nominated to pilot the program across the ACT. The program will deliver units of work for year 7-8 mapped to general capabilities, and units of work for year 9-10 mapped to the work studies subject of the Australian Curriculum. <p>Catholic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic Education has been engaged in ongoing sharing and conversations with the BSSS. <p>Independent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT AIS has been engaged in ongoing sharing and conversations with the BSSS. |
| Build off the lead role that the ACT Teacher Quality Institute has had in quality Initial Teacher Education regulation to actively contribute to quality assurance improvements in the national consistency and transparency of Initial Teacher Education regulation. | All (through the Teacher Quality Institute) | 2019 | <p>Completed in 2021 and ongoing.</p> <p>Teacher Quality Institute</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The national policy initiative (<i>B(ii) Strengthening initial teacher education accreditation</i>) was completed in 2021. • TQI staff and trained Initial Teacher Education (ITE) accreditation panel members actively engaged in national ITE accreditation standards setting workshops. Ongoing. |

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – ACT – 2021

| Actions | Sector(s) | Timing | Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions) |
|--|-----------|--------------|--|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participation in national review of ITE program accreditation guidelines and procedures. Ongoing through Association of Australasian Teacher Regulatory Authorities (ATRA). • Both ITE providers in the ACT implementing nationally approved Teaching Performance Assessment (TPAs) and LANTITE. Ongoing. • All ITE programs offered by the University of Canberra are nationally accredited. Ongoing. • ITE providers in the ACT participate in the national reporting arrangements. Ongoing. • Training for ITE Accreditation Panel members. Ongoing. |
| Develop cross-sectoral collaboration in school leadership. | All | 2020 onwards | <p>Completed in 2020. Activities ongoing.</p> <p>Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leadership forums established and ongoing. <p>Completed and ongoing</p> <p>Catholic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through an active role on Australian Council for Educational Leaders ACT Executive, the promotion of cross sector leadership and awards recognition. |

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – ACT – 2021

| Actions | Sector(s) | Timing | Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions) |
|---------|-----------|--------|--|
| | | | <p>Completed and ongoing</p> <p>Independent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AISACT promotes a ranges of leadership activities and all sector leaders are invited to participate. E.g., Leadership Breakfast and Australian Curriculum updates. |

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – ACT – 2021

Reform Direction C – Enhancing the national evidence base

| Actions | Sector(s) | Timing | Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions) |
|---|-----------|--------------|--|
| Build upon existing NCCD cross-sectoral moderation activities and strengthen consistency on a year by year basis. | All | 2018 onwards | <p>Completed 2020 and ongoing</p> <p>Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross sectoral and cross jurisdictional collaboration on the students with disability National Reference Group. Regular cross-sectoral meetings with Catholic and Independent schools support staff, including specific focus on NCCD. • Broad cross-sectoral moderation activities have been impacted by Covid-related staffing pressure. ACT Education staff have coordinated with Catholic and Independent support offices around moderation activity. <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Catholic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross sectoral moderation occurred face to face in 2018/2019 and was completed virtually in 2020. In 2021 cross sectoral meetings occurred regarding consistency and levels of adjustment. |

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – ACT – 2021

| Actions | Sector(s) | Timing | Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions) |
|---|--|---------------------|---|
| | | | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Independent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross Sectoral collaboration and networking is ongoing. AISACT staff provided consultancy, advice and support to continue the development of staff capacity in this area. |
| <p>Provide national leadership in NAPLAN online by maximising implementation in all ACT schools.</p> | <p>All</p> | <p>2018 onwards</p> | <p>Completed in 2021 and ongoing.</p> <p>Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All ACT Public schools accessed NAPLAN Online in 2021 <p>Completed in 2021.</p> <p>Catholic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All ACT Catholic schools accessed NAPLAN Online in 2021 <p>Completed in 2021.</p> <p>Independent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All ACT independent schools accessed NAPLAN Online in 2021 |
| <p>Contribute to the ongoing data collection for the Australian Teacher Workforce Data Strategy including amendment of legislation to allow for</p> | <p>All (through the Teacher Quality Institute)</p> | <p>2019 onwards</p> | <p>Completed 2021 and ongoing</p> <p>Teacher Quality Institute</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation amended to allow data sharing with Australian Teacher Workforce Data (ATWD). Completed. |

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – ACT – 2021

| Actions | Sector(s) | Timing | Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions) |
|--|-----------|--------------|--|
| sharing of data held by the Teacher Quality Institute. | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoU with the ATWD data linkage agency and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) in place. • Annual upload of ACT Teacher Workforce data to ATWD, via AIHW. Ongoing. • ACT registered teachers participate in the ATWD Teacher Survey. Ongoing annually. |
| Build off the existing ACT cross-sectoral student identifier to actively contribute to the development and implementation of a national Unique Student Identifier. | All | 2019 onwards | <p>Completed and ongoing.</p> <p>Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ACT continues to actively participate in national discussions to implement the December 2019 Education Council decision to generate and operate a national Unique Student Identifier. <p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Catholic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Catholic Education staff contributing to conversations regarding a national Unique Student Identifier. <p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Independent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AISACT Senior official conversations are ongoing. |

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – ACT – 2021

| Actions | Sector(s) | Timing | Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions) |
|---|------------|---------------------|---|
| <p>Build upon recent ACT performance measures to actively contribute to the development of new measures of performance particularly student learning gain and general capabilities.</p> | <p>All</p> | <p>2018 onwards</p> | <p>Completed and ongoing.</p> <p>Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the national level, measures of general capabilities are yet to be developed. • The ACT continues to improve the measurement of student wellbeing, challenging behaviours and student engagement and belonging. <p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Catholic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic Education focusing on reading learning gain through formative assessment and progressive data tracking. <p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Independent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AISACT has provided an ongoing range of professional learning activities to engage school staff in developing their understanding and application in this area. |

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – ACT – 2021

| Actions | Sector(s) | Timing | Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions) |
|---|-----------|--------------|--|
| Implement new national measures of performance particularly student learning gain and general capabilities. | Gov | As available | <p>Completed and ongoing.</p> <p>Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2021, the ACT reported performance against the strategic measures - Strength of student engagement and belonging with their school. • Due to Covid-19, NAPLAN was not conducted in 2020. As a result, there was no new data to report against the Student learning growth or Equity of student outcomes measures. • Measures of general capability will be added once developed nationally. |