Non-Government Reform Support Annual Report

2023

Association of Independent Schools of the ACT

Executive Summary

The Association of Independent Schools of the ACT's Strategic Intent has guided the decisions and work of the Association as it articulates the key directions needed to achieve the Association's goals. The Strategic Intent is supported by several operational plans.

Since 2018, AISACT has built and further developed the capacity of independent schools in the ACT to meet the Australian Government's school education reform priorities for non-government schools and has continued to build on this work. Through the 2023 work plan, AISACT continued to enhance activities and further embed best practice support across the Association member schools.
To this end, AISACT provided a range of innovative, bespoke, and responsive programs beginning in January 2023.

AISACT continued to build on the previous work on the **quality assurance, moderation, and support for the continued improvement of Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability,** with a continued focus on leadership development. In addition, the provision of expert advice from an experienced staff member who provided both hotline support and advice through on-site support at individual schools.

AISACT continued to work to ensure that all 18 Member Schools have access to advice and assistance regarding the implementation of the online delivery of the **National Assessment** program.

The priority **addressing the improvement of governance and financial management practices in non-government schools** has over the years of the Reform Support Fund seen the provision of a range of programs including those provided by the Australian Institute of Company Directors available to all member schools Board Directors in 2018 and 2019. These were then complemented in 2020 -2022 with the development of a range of resource materials, and in 2023 the focus continued through the provision of sessions which addressed the use of the resource materials and further resources developed to meet emerging needs.

In addition to stand-alone bespoke courses, a culture of sharing and support emerged through focussed committee and network meetings involving Principal/Leaders, Business Managers, and directors in Independent Schools.

Leadership development, staff and student wellbeing, mental health, as well as **coaching for school improvement,** continued to be a focus during 2023.

AISACT continued to provide specialist professional learning programs as identified in the Bilateral Agreement addressing **Australian Curriculum, including general capabilities, reporting against the achievement standards, School Leadership, and literacy and numeracy.** A continued focus was on maximising growth for diverse learners and evidence into action.

Staff in member schools were encouraged to share their learning and action research through a variety of events and forums throughout the year all enhancing and supporting the values of AISACT.

Relationship with state and territory government

As the representative body for the Independent School sector in the ACT, the Association represented the sector's views to Territory and Federal governments on matters of significance and importance in education and its Member Schools. The Association continues to work closely with the ACT Minister for Education and Early Childhood, Ms Yvette Berry MLA, ministerial advisors, and senior officials from the ACT Education Directorate. The Association also worked closely with The Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, Catholic Education continuing to advance the specific issues relating to and impacting on Non-Government Schools in the ACT.

The Independent, Catholic and Government schooling sectors continued to work collaboratively in the implementation of reforms outlined in the bi-lateral agreement through quarterly cross-sectoral executive meetings to share progress and challenges and by maintaining cross-sectoral reform-specific governance mechanisms such as NAPLAN Online Steering Group, Australian Curriculum Assessment working group. In addition, the AISACT continues to engage with the Education Directorate regarding of the implementations of the initiatives embedded in the ACT Future of Education Plan and where in particular cross sectorial initiatives can be realised. AISACT continues to contribute to work around the data collection for the Australian Teacher Workforce Data Strategy and the development of a national Unique Student Identifier.

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The Association continued to collaborate and contribute to provide input through reform specific governance mechanisms regarding the implementation the agreed priorities of the Bilateral Agreement with all education sectors in the ACT.

Summary of 2023 achievements

1. Project Title	2. Project description and activities	3. Expected outcomes/ Overall achievements Achieved or Not achieved	4. Indicators of success	5. List any additional or variations of Activities undertaken/Achieved outcomes
Governance Commonwealth priority Governance and Financial Management Practices **Governance Workshops**	**Governance Workshops** Working with Member School Board Chairs through the Chair Connect network, the AISACT Governance Principles will be unpacked. **Legal Lens Resources SH&G**	Improved understanding of agile governance implementation including how do we implement better governance & the Board's role in monitoring & measuring performance, based on the AISACT School Governance Principles document &Toolkit. **Achieved** Resources developed to support the implementation of the new ACT Education Act amendments and Registration guidelines **Achieved**	50% of AISACT member schools engage with the workshop series. **Not achieved** Feedback indicates that higher than 80% of participants reported growth and an enhanced understanding of the range of information presented. **Achieved**	Governance workshops were delivered on request at individual schools

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	Developing A Child Safe Strategy for your School.	Member Schools participate in four workshops designed to support the development of a Child Safe Strategy within their school. **Achieved**	For participants to make significant progress towards designing a meaningful Child Safe Strategy for their respective school. **Achieved**	
	Business Management Modelling for Business Managers	Business Managers Support Forum participants will share and develop a better understanding and application of a range of business issues which impact on their role and management of their schools. Topics may include: • Cyber Risks in Schools: Strategies to mitigate and manage incidents. • Mental and Psychological Health Safety – workforce resilience • Reforms in Legislation regarding claims and implications of implementation. **Achieved**		

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Commonwealth Government priority **Wellbeing and Leadership**	**Youth Mental Health First Aid** This workshop connects relevant research and understanding surrounding adolescent mental health problems and adolescents in a mental health crisis, through understanding the prevalence and approaches to strategies for adults within a school environment.	Increase school leader and teacher knowledge and understanding about how to assist adolescents who are developing a mental health problem or in a mental health crisis Determine the difference between developing mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders, psychosis and substance misuse and mental health crises such as suicidal thoughts and behaviour, non-suicidal self-injury, panic attacks, traumatic events, severe psychotic states, acute effects from alcohol or other drug misuse and aggressive behaviours **Achieved**	Pre and post workshop data indicating that higher than 80% of participants reported growth and an enhanced understanding of adolescent mental health, and how best to support students. Call from current participants to hold YMHFA again in 2024 for colleagues unable to attend.	Masterclasses were not held however, support was provided on an as needs basis to individual schools
	Health Plans and School Policies This masterclass will support school leadership to update/develop and implement individual student health plans and school policies surrounding mental health	• Develop / implement individual student health plans and school policies • Develop through collaboration school mental health care policies • Develop / implement individual student plans. **Not achieved**	50% or more of AISACT schools engage in masterclass modules and shape/modify school documentation accordingly.	

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Bilateral Agreement Bilateral Reform Direction A: Support students, student learning and achievement **Maximising Growth for Diverse Learners**	This 2023 professional learning provides teachers with the tools and understanding to understand and meet the needs of diverse learners in mixed ability classrooms. The courses are delivered via two masterclass sessions. **Module One:** Advanced Understanding and Meeting the Needs of Twice-Exceptional students **Module Two:** Advanced Gifted and Acceleration Policy Development	Developing of teacher capacity to: - Deeper dive into knowing how to recognise and cater for the needs of twice-exceptional students - Ensuring schools have appropriate documentation in place for the management of gifted programs and procedures across respective schools **Achieved**	50% or more of AISACT schools engaged in masterclass Modules and shape/modify school documentation accordingly.	Delivery - online
Bilateral Agreement Australian Curriculum and Pedagogy Bilateral Reform Direction A: Support students, student learning and achievement **Australian Curriculum and Pedagogy**	This professional learning provides teachers with the tools and understanding to help familiarisation with the Australian Curriculum Learning Areas v9.0 A series of Australian Curriculum workshops will be provided.	Increased understanding and application of Australian Curriculum V9.0 in readiness for ACT implementation in 2024. This has been achieved through the provision of access to a range of resources and bespoke mentoring sessions with schools: AISACT resource: Developing an implementation plan for AC ACARA range of modules and resources – e.g: Professional Learning Hub for all AC Learning Areas covering key changes and unpacking the learning area; Work Samples for learning areas;	All AISACT schools engage in professional learning and shape/modify school documentation accordingly to transition to AC V9.0 by 2024. All AISACT schools indicated ready to implement all ACv9.0 Learning Areas in 2024.	High focus on the range of resources, predominantly developed and provided by ACARA across 2023, to support understanding and application of ACv9.0.

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		Curriculum Connections documents; FIRST framework to assist with engaging in local First Nations communities; Parent/carer information on the ACv9.0. **Achieved**		
Self-Regulated Learning - Action Research Program Micro Credentialling with University of Canberra post AISACT course completion being negotiated.	This professional learning consists of four core learning themes. Each theme will involve learning tasks that require each participant to engage with relevant literature and practical based tasks. **Theme 1:** Applications of motivational science **Theme 2**: Understanding and enhancing cognitive processes of learning. **Theme 3:** Metacognition, the reflective practitioner and self-regulated learning **Theme 4:** Sustainability of teaching approaches and self-regulated learning.	Understanding of cognitive psychology principles that underpin self-regulated learning Linkage of personal, student and classroom learning scenarios with theories of motivation, cognition and metacognition Support the development of self-regulated learning. **Achieved**	Pre and post workshop data indicating that higher than 80% of participants reported growth and an enhanced understanding of self-regulated learning principles and classroom application.	

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Bilateral Reform Direction B: Support teaching, school leadership and school improvement
Evidence into Action: Implementation for School Improvement Mentoring Program
	This project builds on school engagement in previous Evidence into Action workshops. It is a tailored professional learning and mentoring program for AISACT schools to support the ongoing development and delivery of an implementation plan based on individual school priorities.
	Workshop 1 - Using the Education Action Plan to turn evidence into action. Development of a monitoring and evaluation plan aligned to respective implementation plans; explore the concepts of monitoring and evaluation relevant to schools Mentoring sessions for participating schools.
	
	Workshop 2 – Evaluative sharing of projects covering: active ingredients, implementation activities, implementation outcomes, short-term outcomes, key learnings, ongoing considerations.
		Participating schools will:
		• investigate the hierarchy of evidence (Deeble & Vaughan, 2018) and the latest evidence within the Teaching & Learning Toolkit
		• learn how to structure a change in their school based on evidence through the Education Action Plan (EAP).
		• use the EAP as a road map for an improvement journey.
		• look at the practice-based evidence that they have gathered after implementing their Education Action Plan for 6 months. The educators will investigate their quantitative and qualitative evidence and answer the questions of:
		  - Has there been an improvement in students' learning?
		  - What are the active ingredients involved in the implementation of the approach?
		
		Achieved
			Post program data indicating that higher than 80% of participants reported growth and an enhanced understanding of the how to structure a change in their schools via the EAP.
			
			Post program data indicating that higher than 80% of participants reported growth and an enhanced understanding of the how to investigate their quantitative and qualitative data to support teaching, school leadership and school improvement.
			
			Sharing of action research projects at the annual AISACT Celebrating Teaching & Learning event. November 8, 2023. Uploading of exemplars to AISACT website.	

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Bilateral Agreement Bilateral Reform Direction B: Support teaching, school leadership and school improvement **Embedding Research Literacy in School**	Delivered by Evidence 4 Learning, educators will engage with both the conceptual and practical aspects of building capability around the use of research evidence, including barriers and enablers of research use, and practical aspects of promoting the use of evidence in their schools.	Participating schools will engage in a series of online modules, delivered by Evidence 4 learning, to consider both the conceptual and practical aspects of building capability around the use of research evidence, including barriers and enablers of research use, and practical aspects of promoting the use of evidence in their schools. **Achieved**	Post program data indicating that higher than 80% of participants reported growth and an enhanced understanding of research literacy.	
Leadership and Wellbeing Bilateral Reform Direction B: Support teaching, school leadership and school improvement **Leadership and Middle Management**	**Leadership Network Mentoring Program** Working with Principals, participants will be individually mentored and coached through their leadership journey and growth **Professional Development for School Executive Teams** (Exhale). This program explores leadership through the lens of 5 drivers of wellbeing: Purpose, Mind, Body, Connection & Financial (capped at 4 schools)	Participants will recognise a range of leadership styles. Participants will explore what best supports their individual authentic leadership. **Not achieved** School leaders will better use a range of strategies and tools to better manage their own energy levels, mindset and priorities and that of their respective teams. **Achieved** Build capacity within Member schools regarding Safeguarding policies and practices. **Achieved**	Post program data indicating that higher than 80% of participants reported growth and an enhanced understanding of leadership. Post program data indicating that higher than 100% of participants reported growth and an enhanced understanding of leading and promoting a resilient school community. Monitor accessing of resources on the AISACT website.	Progress in planning was interrupted due to developer unavailability. Both the Safeguarding Resource Hub and the Guiding Principles for School Staff and Teacher wellbeing were launched at a range of forums and are available on the AISACT website.

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School Improvement Programs and Resources	Develop a **Safeguarding Resource Hub.** Suitable resources will be compiled for use within the AISACT website. This will include top tips, procedures, fact sheets, and flow charts. Develop **Guiding Principles for Creating a Culture of Wellbeing in Schools.** This will be accompanied by support resources to provide guidance, actionable solutions and templates for a school wellbeing strategy with associated fact sheets	Provision of an overarching guide to developing proactive and sustainable wellbeing practices that will replace the reactive haphazard approaches taken by many schools to supporting staff wellbeing. **Achieved**		
Leadership and Student Wellbeing Bilateral Reform Direction B: Support teaching, school leadership and school improvement Inclusion and Student Wellbeing	Series of 6x 1.5-hour workshops presented by the **ACT BeYou** team. Topics to be chosen based on input from schools. Post Vention Training for schools will be offered in collaboration with StandBy staff – 2 sessions.	Schools will have access to current, highly relevant research and an opportunity to collaborate and network with the BeYou and StandBy expert teams. **Not achieved**	Pre and post workshop data indicate that higher than 80% of participants report an enhanced understanding regarding issues of student well-being and feelings of school being a safe place. Post workshop data for specific topic workshops indicate 80% or more report enhanced understandings of and confidence in responding to topic areas.	BeYou and StandBy change of staff led to unavailability of BeYou and StandBy expertise.

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Leadership and Wellbeing Bilateral reform Direction B Support teaching, school leadership and school improvement AISACT Amplify Program for Early Career Teachers	**Supporting Early Career Teachers** To support the AISACT in the provision of quality induction and onboarding opportunities for early career teachers (ECTs) through the delivery of an evidence-informed professional learning program that focused on enhancing the capacity of teachers to deal with the increasing complexity of their role. (Sue Chandler Transformative Schools)	Enhanced confidence and wellbeing capability and the establishment of a strong network of support and engagement in shared reflective practice. Stories of Practice to be shared at the 2023 AISACT Celebrating Teaching and Learning event. **Achieved**	50% of AISACT member schools engage with the workshop series. Post program data indicates that higher than 80% of participants reported an enhanced appreciation of tools and strategies that build connections with students, the importance of co-regulation when working with challenging behaviours, deploying collaborative-proactive solutions in the establishment of classroom expectations.	
Leadership and School Improvement – School Improvement through Coaching	A range of programs and activities will be provided to support member's schools in further developing their knowledge of the use and the impact of coaching on enhancing staff and student outcomes. Crowther Centre Brighton Grammar continues its online webinar modules.	Coaching in Education is recognised as a key ingredient in school improvement, and an important way to build teaching and learning capacity, develop leadership skills and improve learning outcomes and wellbeing. **Achieved**	Post program data indicates that higher than 80% of participants reported growth and an enhanced understanding of coaching and acquired skills.	

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	Growth Coaching provides the Introduction to Leadership Coaching Program	Participants in all programs will develop specific skills and an understanding of how coaching can positively impact student outcomes and leadership communication skills. **Achieved**		
Agreements Improving governance Bilateral Reform Direction B Support teaching, school leadership and School improvement Supporting Member Schools through Agreements	The office of the AISACT enters agreements with a range of providers to provide expert advice and support on a need's basis to member schools: 1.**Legal support/helpline,** Snedden Hall &Gallop – to ensure that general advice on governance, legislation, financial matters, and staff wellbeing is provided to leaders in Member schools (specific legal action that schools may need to pursue is not covered)	Schools can confidentially access the expert advice required as needed to meet a range of issues. **Achieved**	Providers report that Member schools access these services.	

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	2.**Complaints and Investigations** – Halloran & Morrissey Halloran Morrissey to provide specialised and expert advice and support to AISACT members schools around: identifying reportable allegations; mandatory reporting responsibilities to CYPS and ACT Policing; managing risk and initial response to reportable conduct matters; other child wellbeing or safeguarding concerns identified 3.**Employee Assist and Counselling Advice** – through Catholic Care & Exhale People			

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Events Bilateral Reform Direction A: Support students, student learning and achievement AISACT Celebrating Teaching & Learning	**The AISACT Celebrating Teaching and Learning event** is an opportunity to hear about and discuss the extensive range of teaching and learning projects and programs that have occurred in AISACT Member Schools. This event provides an opportunity for AISACT Member Schools to come together as a group and celebrate the successes enjoyed, challenges met, and lessons learned.	Enhanced awareness of exemplary teaching and learning projects and strategies. **Achieved**	Post workshop data indicating that higher than 80% of participants reported an enhanced appreciation of teaching and learning strategies. Strongly Agree/Agree 80%.	In addition, a Twilight Colloquium was held and featured 4 of our principals in a discussion around the topic "As integral partners in the education landscape of ACT, AISACT member schools are committed to contributing to the overall quality and good of ACT education. The Association's values of Independence, Choice, Diversity and Excellence are cornerstones that elevate member school impact." This was a cross sectoral event.
Leadership Recognition and Seminar	**The AISACT Leadership Recognition and Seminar event** draws from Member school leaders and leadership teams to share, collaborate, reflect and recognise leadership journeys and successes throughout the year.	Recognition of a range of leaders and their exemplary leadership and strategies. **Achieved**	100% of Member schools represented.	
Leadership Breakfast Series		The challenges for leadership in educational settings are numerous, and school leaders increasingly look beyond their own environments to learn more and improve their leadership capacity. Develop cross-sectoral collaboration in school leadership. **Achieved**	Post program data indicates that higher than 80% of the AISACT school membership engaged in this leadership series. Cross sectoral representation was supported	

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	The **AISACT Leadership Breakfast** engages school leaders across the ACT, irrespective of schooling sector, in issues of significance and importance in the education sphere; specifically, lessons in leadership as delivered by guest speakers, and how these lessons may be transferred to schools to enhance the learning achievements of all students Significant national speakers provide a breakfast talk on their journey and learnings about leadership			

2023 Budget Expenditure

Project Activities	Reform Support Funding
NCCD	
Consultancy to schools provided by staff, Inclusion and Student Well-Being	$0
Trauma Informed Practice	$0
NAPLAN Online	$0
Improving governance and financial management	
Train the trainer Governance Principles	$0
Business Modelling and Financial Management for Business Managers	$2,153
Legal Lens for Schools - Resource Development SH&G	$3,090
Developing a Child safe strategy	$15,300
Safeguarding Resource Hub	$4,725
Bilateral Agreement	
Evidence into Action Mentoring Program	$12,187
Embedding Research Literacy in Schools	$2,900
Maximising Growth for Diverse Learners and Mentoring Sessions	$1,000
Leadership & Wellbeing	
Self-Regulated Learning Action program	$20,335
Executive Team Program	$7,088
Wellbeing Resource	$33,684
Introduction to Leadership Coaching	$9,495
Youth Mental Health First Aid	$4,632
Early Career Teachers	$10,377
School Improvement through Coaching	$3,000
Agreements	
Legal Support and Advice SH&G	$13,101
Employer Assist Program – Catholic Care	$4,290
Complaints and Investigations Halloran Morrissey	$16,875
Events	
Leadership and Recognition Seminar	$8,568
Leadership Breakfast Series	$4,091
Celebrating Teaching and Learning	$2,249
Administration of Projects	$281,860
TOTAL	**$461,000**