



Torrens Primary School

Annual School Board Report 2021



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This report supports the work being done in the ACT Education Directorate, as outlined in *Strategic Plan 2018-21: A Leading Learning Organisation*.

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Reporting to the community

Schools report to communities in range of ways, including through:

- Annual School Board Reports
- a (5-year) School Improvement Plan (formerly School Strategic Plan)
- annual Impact Reports
- newsletters
- other sources such as My School.

Summary of School Board activity

The Torrens school board met four times in 2021. Through these meetings many aspects of the Torrens school policies, procedures, and strategies were discussed and progressed.

Schooling was face-to-face for terms 1 and 2, which allowed school excursions to continue as planned and Torrens' students in years 4 and 5 gave their all in Wakakirri. Remote learning began abruptly early in Term 3 and continued through half of term 4. As happened in 2020, teachers and students pivoted to remote learning with parents providing support. It was a difficult time for all, and we acknowledge everyone's efforts through this time.

School returned with extra requirements to manage the spread of Covid. The school was separated into three cohorts, requiring extra logistical pressures on teachers and admin staff, and parents were not able to come into the school grounds, modifying end of year activities. Teachers worked hard to provide special experiences, including a year-6 graduation dinner held at the school.

Mr Mark Nicholson was acting school principal for 2021. He led the school admirably through this period of continued change while our permanent principal, Ms Rachel Matthews, was on extended leave. The school board extends its sincere thanks to 'Mr Nico' for his hard work and open communications throughout the year. We also note the support given to Mr Nico by Ms Cindie Deeker Principal of Duffy Primary.

In 2021, the school focused on the second goal in the school's 2019-23 Strategic Plan – to improve growth in maths by the end of 2023. The school made some progress towards achieving this goal with teachers feeling more competent and confident in enriching and extending students. Students demonstrated continued growth in maths based on in-school assessment. However, the 2021 NAPLAN results did not show improvement in student growth and reasons for this are provided in the School Impact Report 2021. Torrens is continuing to work towards its two targets under its 2019-23 Strategic Plan: improving growth in maths and improving growth in writing.

Torrens had not had a language program since 2018 due to not being able to recruit a suitable language teacher. The school board worked with the school in 2021 to introduce the basics of Japanese to the curriculum without a language teacher. Teachers held a welcome to Japan day at the end of term 2. Notwithstanding the difficulty of Covid, it is an extremely challenging task for classroom teachers to add a language to their program. We thank staff for their extra efforts and

being open to exploring how to make this work due to it being a compulsory part of the school curriculum. We also welcome the appointment of a Japanese language teacher to the school in 2022 which has allowed Torrens to offer a language program once again, and students have embraced it with great enthusiasm.

The school board continued to improve communication and information flow with the school P&C. The board has a formal P&C representative, Alison Burr. Alison organised for the school psychologist, Caroline Daniel, to present to the P&C on the services she offers. In addition, as part of a regular refresh of school policies, Parent representative board members informed the P&C of the Safe and Supportive Schools ACT Education Directorate policies.

The school invested in improved facilities over 2021, completing the new all-weather soccer pitch and upgrading the senior toilets.

The school board commends all Torrens Primary teachers and staff for their outstanding dedication to teaching and caring for our students during another year disrupted by Covid.

We thank a number of long-time Torrens teachers who moved at the end of 2021 to other schools. In particular, Ms Belinda Bacon, school executive teacher, and Ms Kirrilee Turner, who led the school music and drama program for over ten years, will be missed.

I would also like to thank the school board – parent representatives, Kristin Delaney (Chair until end 2020) and Alison Burr, and teacher representatives Emma Thomas and Sandi Lees, and Ingrid Gaunt for her work as board secretariat, including her excellent administration of the school budget.

Joanne Halliday

Torrens Primary School Board Deputy Chair (2019-2021)

School Context

Torrens Primary School opened in 1968 and is located in the suburb of Torrens in central Canberra. The suburb is named after a former Governor of South Australia Sir Robert Torrens. Three preschools located in the suburbs of Pearce, Chifley and Torrens are attached to Torrens Primary School. Torrens has an enrolment of about 500 students - 88 students in the preschools and around 460 in the primary school.

The school's motto 'Teamwork and Tolerance' reflects the aims of the school to encourage a spirit of co-operation and community while fostering respect and understanding for all. The school aims to provide quality experiences that empower students to live in and contribute to a changing society.

Torrens Primary School is proud of the rich educational environment and rigorous programs provided for all students. Torrens Primary School strives to develop in students the ability to work as members of a team in cooperative learning environments and to appreciate the worth of individual differences. The capacity to

act as responsible, independent citizens who care about themselves and their environment is key.

The school's mission is to provide a purposeful productive and comprehensive education of the highest quality. Academic areas of focus include literacy and numeracy with special emphasis on explicit and guided teaching, inquiry units of work from P-6 with a school wide focus on quality teaching and learning. Specialist programs offered at Torrens include Science, leadership, The Arts, wellbeing, library and cooking in our state-of-the-art kitchen.

Students at Torrens benefit from a broad variety of programs designed to promote pride and excellence such as, Positive Behaviours for Learning where students demonstrate they are safe, respectful learners, Instrumental Music Program brass bands in years 5 and 6, clubs, challenges and competitions, and leadership opportunities throughout the school such as Student Parliament, School Captains, Sports Captains, Sustainability Programs, and the cluster 'Dream, Believe, Succeed' conference. Notable inclusions to the activities offered at Torrens include the Student Wellbeing @ Torrens (SW@T) team providing extra support for students, staff and families within the community, years 4 and 5 enter the Wakakirri Story/Dance competition where we have been finalists, and our approach to Cultural Integrity where we raise the profile of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Our preschools create and maintain a warm learning environment where staff, children and parents are engaged in developing cooperative relationships, and the abilities and skills of children to the fullest extent of their capabilities. The planned program introduces children to the world around them by learning through play, participation, exploration and experimentation.

The school is committed to working in partnership with parents, striving to ensure that all students are given every opportunity to achieve their full potential. We believe the partnership between school and home is extremely important to develop and foster high academic achievement and an enduring love of learning. Torrens Primary School enjoys strong community involvement and support in all aspects of school life.

Student Information

Student enrolment

In this reporting period there were a total of 467 students enrolled at this school.

Table: Student enrolment

Student type	Number of students
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Gender - Male	225
Gender - Female	242
Gender - Non-binary or other*	0
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	19
LBOTE**	159

Source: ACT Education Directorate, Analytics and Evaluation Branch

* If the number of non-binary students is less than six, or if gender is unknown, these are randomly assigned 'Male' or 'Female' and included in the counts.

** Language Background Other Than English

Student attendance

The following table identifies the attendance rate of students by year level during this reporting period. Student attendance rate is the percentage of school days attended by students in each year level at the school. Student attendance is measured over two school terms; that is from the first day of the school year for students in term 1 to the last day of term 2.

*NOTE: Student attendance data for this period should be understood within the context of flexible learning arrangements enacted in response to COVID19. Comparison of attendance figures to previous reporting periods is not valid.

Table: Attendance rates in percentages

Year level	Attendance rate
1	93.0
2	94.0
3	94.0
4	94.0
5	94.0
6	91.0

Source: ACT Education Directorate, Analytics and Evaluation Branch

Supporting attendance and managing non-attendance

ACT public schools support parents and careers to meet their legal responsibilities in relation to the compulsory education requirements of the *Education Act 2004*. The Education Directorate's *Education Participation (Enrolment and Attendance) Policy* describes its position with regard to supporting attendance and managing non-attendance. A suite of procedures supports the implementation of the policy. Please refer to <https://www.education.act.gov.au/> for further details.

Staff Information

Teacher qualifications

All teachers at this school meet the professional requirements for teaching in an ACT public school. The ACT Teacher Quality Institute (TQI) specifies two main types of provision for teachers at different stages of their career, these are detailed below.

- **Full registration** is for teachers with experience working in a registered school in Australia or New Zealand who have been assessed as meeting the Proficient level of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.
- **Provisional registration** is for newly qualified teachers or teachers who do not have recent experience teaching in a school in Australia and New Zealand. Many teachers moving to Australia from another country apply for Provisional registration.

Workforce composition

Workforce composition for the current reporting period is provided in the following table. The data is taken from the school's verified August staffing report. For reporting purposes, it incorporates all school staff including preschools, staff absent for a period of less than four consecutive weeks and staff replacing staff absent for more than four consecutive weeks. It does not include casuals and staff absent for a period of four consecutive weeks or longer.

The Education Directorate is required to report Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff figures. As of June of the reporting period, 135 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff members were employed across the Directorate.

Table: Workforce composition numbers

Staff employment category	TOTAL
Teaching Staff: Full Time Equivalent Permanent	26.31
Teaching Staff: Full Time Equivalent Temporary	3.40
Non Teaching Staff: Full Time Equivalent	13.18

Source: ACT Education Directorate, People and Performance Branch

School Review and Development

The ACT Education Directorate's Strategic Plan 2018-2021 provides the framework and strategic direction for School Improvement Plans (formerly School Strategic Plans). This is supported by the school performance and accountability framework '*People, Practice and Performance: School Improvement in Canberra Public Schools, A Framework for Performance and Accountability*'. Annually, system and school level data are used alongside the National School Improvement Tool to support targeted school improvement, high standards in student learning, innovation and best practice in ACT public schools.

Our school was reviewed in 2018. A copy of the Report of Review can be found on our school website.

School Satisfaction

Schools use a range of evidence to gain an understanding of the satisfaction levels of their parents and carers, staff and students. Annually in August/ September ACT schools undertake a survey to gain an understanding of school satisfaction at that time. This information is collected from staff, parents and from 2020 students from year 4 and above (previously year 5 and above) through an online survey.

Overall Satisfaction

In this period of reporting, 79.1% of parents and carers, 100.0% of staff, and 79.8% of students at this school indicated they were satisfied with the education provided by the school.

Included in the survey were 8 staff, 9 parent, and 10 student items which are described as the national opinion items. These items were approved by the then Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) for use from 2015. The following tables show the percentage of parents and carers, students and staff who agreed with each of the national opinion items at this school.

Due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the survey was taken in November, rather than in August as has been done in previous years. This was just after the majority of students and staff returned to school-based learning after a period of around 3 months of remote learning. A number of questions were removed from previous years' to shorten the time required by community members to complete the survey.

A total of 28 staff responded to the survey. Please note that not all responders answered every question.

Table: Proportion of staff* in agreement with each national opinion item

National opinion item	
Parents at this school can talk to teachers about their concerns.	93
Staff get quality feedback on their performance.	52
Student behaviour is well managed at this school.	89
Teachers want every student to do their best. (Replaces 'Teachers at this school expect students to do their best')	100
Staff at this school treat students with respect. (Replaces 'Teachers at this school treat students fairly')	100
Teachers give useful feedback.	92
This school is well maintained.	71
The way decisions are made in this school are appropriate (Replaces 'This school takes staff opinions seriously')	89

Source: ACT Education Directorate, Analytics and Evaluation Branch

*Proportion of those who responded to each individual survey question

A total of 91 parents responded to the survey. Please note that not all responders answered every question.

Table: Proportion of parents and carers* in agreement with each national opinion item

National opinion item	
My child feels safe at this school.	91
My child is making good progress at this school.	75
Student behaviour is well managed at this school.	78
Teachers at this school believe that every student can be a success. (Replaces 'Teachers at this school expect my child to do his or her best')	80
Teachers give useful feedback.	73
Staff at this school treat students with respect. (Replaces 'Teachers at this school treat students fairly')	88
This school is well maintained.	82
This school is active in seeking parents' opinion and ideas for making important decisions.(Replaces 'This school takes parents' opinions seriously')	57
This school works with me to support my child's learning.	64

Source: ACT Education Directorate, Analytics and Evaluation Branch

*Proportion of those who responded to each individual survey question

A total of 183 students responded to the survey. Please note that not all responders answered every question.

Table: Proportion of students* in agreement with each national opinion item

National opinion item	
I feel I can talk to teachers about problems at school. (Replaces 'I can talk to teachers about my concern')	48
I feel safe at this school.	67
I am happy to be part of this school.(Replaces 'I like being at my school')	75
I am interested in what I learn in school. (Replaces 'My school gives me opportunities to do interesting things')	58
My school is well maintained.	71
Teachers want every student to do their best.(Replaces 'My teachers expect me to do my best')	87
Teachers encourage students to try out new ideas. (Replaces 'My teachers motivate me to learn')	73
Staff take students' concerns seriously.	55
Staff treat students with respect. (Replaces 'Teachers at my school treat students fairly')	76
Teachers give useful feedback.	67

Source: ACT Education Directorate, Analytics and Evaluation Branch

*Proportion of those who responded to each individual survey question

Learning and Assessment

Performance in Literacy and Numeracy

Early years assessment

Students in kindergarten undertake an on-entry and on-exit assessment of their early reading and numeracy skills using the BASE program. Student results are reported against five performance bands at the end of semester 1 and 2. Below are the results for this school for the current reporting period.

Table: Torrens Primary School BASE 2021 mean raw scores

Agency	Reading start	Reading end	Numeracy start	Numeracy end
School	53	131	39	58
ACT	58	125	38	56

Source: ACT Education Directorate, Analytics and Evaluation Branch

NAPLAN

Students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in all ACT schools participate in the National Assessment Program-Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). This program assesses skills in reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy.

In this reporting period, 1.64 % of year 3 students and 0.00 % of year 5 students were exempt from testing based on nationally agreed criteria.

For reasons of statistical reliability, as well as to protect the privacy of students, results are not reported when the sample size is less than five.

The following table shows the mean scores achieved by students at this school compared to all other ACT public schools for this reporting period.

Table: NAPLAN Mean Scores

Test Domain	Year 3 School	Year 3 ACT	Year 5 School	Year 5 ACT
Reading	462	437	544	515
Writing	423	418	471	475
Spelling	423	409	522	502
Grammar & Punctuation	444	426	524	497
Numeracy	427	404	516	492

Financial Summary

The school has provided the Directorate with an end of year financial statement that was approved by the school board. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school. The following summary covers use of funds for operating costs and does not include expenditure in areas such as permanent salaries, buildings and major maintenance.

Table: Financial Summary

INCOME	January-December
Directorate Funding	365583.36
Contributions and Donations	23677.23
Subject Contributions	659.00
Hire of Facilities	12881.82
External Revenue	886.37
Sale of Assets	0.00
Interest Received	5244.96
Other School Revenue	14533.06
TOTAL INCOME	423465.80
EXPENDITURE	
Utilities and General Overheads	88614.72
Security and Caretaking	0.00
Maintenance	56623.56
Administration	22248.50
Staffing Expenditure	0.00
Communication	2459.40
Assets & Leases	79369.21
General Expenses	38202.72
Educational Resources	23348.52
Subject Consumables	5043.60
Directorate Funded Payments	10305.65
Other Payments	4709.30
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	330925.18
OPERATING RESULT	92540.62
Accumulated Funds	122742.81
BALANCE	215283.43

Voluntary Contributions

The funds listed were used to support the general operations of the school. The spending of voluntary contributions is in line with the approved budget for this reporting period.

As at December 2021

- Voluntary contributions Income: \$11,835.00
- Library trust fund Income: \$19,710.00
- Building trust fund Income: \$20,250.00

Reserves

Name and Purpose	Amount	Expected Completion
Junior Bathrooms a) Reserve is to save funds to upgrade junior toilet block b) Having access to appropriate facilities is essential to maintaining Health requirements for students.	\$128,000	Unknown
Oval upgrade a) Upgrade senior oval to ensure it is a more modern (soccer) and sustainable (fake grass) space. b) Ensure physical play space is safe and modern.	\$156,000 This was reimburse as an election promise and funds returned into accumulated funds.	Completed Mid 2021

Endorsement Page

Members of the School Board

Parent Representative(s):	Joanne Halliday	Kristin Delaney	Alison Burr
Teacher Representative(s):	Emma Thomas	Sandi Lees	
Board Chair:	Kristin Delaney (2021)		
Principal:	Mark Nicholson (2021) Rachel Mathews (T1, 2021, 2022)		

I approve the report, prepared in accordance with the provision of the ACT *Education Act 2004*, section 52.

2021 Board Chair Signature: Kristen Delaney Date: 27/ 06/ 2022

I certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief the evidence and information reported in this Annual School Board Report represents an accurate record of the Board's operations during this reporting period.

Principal Signature: Mark Nicholson (Acting SLA) Date: 27 / 06 / 2022