

**QUESTIONS RECEIVED FROM NTCOGSO  
2020 ANNUAL FULL COUNCIL MEETING Q&A SESSION (7 NOVEMBER 2020)  
NOTES FOR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

<p><b>Q1</b></p>	<p><b>When and how, will remote schools have better internet and ICT access so that we can put into practice the wonderful tech programs and education resources that are already being accessed within mainstream schooling, to continue to close gap.</b></p> <p>I agree this is a key issue for our remote schools.</p> <p>Decisions regarding the ICT infrastructure for the Northern Territory are a matter for Government.</p> <p>Our colleagues in Department of Corporate and Digital Development are responsible for planning and delivering the architecture and ICT services to our schools.</p> <p>We have a strategy in place- <i>Accelerate - Education for all with Technology and Information 2019-2022</i> strategy.</p> <p>Included in the strategy is an acceleration lever focused on ‘Solutions that enhance learning, support teachers and save time for teachers’. Under this lever are a range of actions that aim to improve the use of cloud based systems and applications to meet the needs of schools and their communities.</p>	<p>All regions</p>
<p><b>Q2</b></p>	<p><b>Why does the department allow schools to use the school council cash budget for employing teachers?</b></p> <p>Under the <i>Education Act</i> a school representative body is a body corporate which can, in accordance with the <i>Fair Work Act 2009</i> (Cth) and any relevant award, employ persons (on any terms and conditions that are approved in writing by the CEO.)</p> <p>Staff employed or contracted by school representative bodies, including relief teachers, are paid directly from school held funds (i.e. the cash budget). Schools have the autonomy and flexibility to decide how to strategically use their cash reserves to best meet the needs of their student cohort.</p> <p>Schools are autonomous and can employ more teachers or other resources through the NT government employment arrangements.</p> <p>The large majority of employees (ongoing and fixed contract staff) are employed by the Northern Territory Government and are paid using department-held school-managed funds.</p>	<p>Rivers</p>
<p><b>Q3</b></p>	<p><b>Why does the Department continue to fund schools based on attendance data not enrolment numbers?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective Enrolment is actually a measure that combines both enrolment and attendance data to determine effective attendance, being the number of students at a school in front of the teacher.</li> </ul>	<p>Darwin</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The School Resourcing Model is a needs based funding model that has a level of base funding plus loading based things like on the needs of the current student cohort. Effective enrolment is one of the many components in that methodology alongside socio-economic status, EALD learners, students with a disability, students of aboriginal background.</li> <li>• The funding model has been refined and improved over time since its introduction based on an external review conducted by Ernst &amp; Young.</li> <li>• The department has committed to begin a review of the component of the funding model related to effective enrolment funding methodology in late 2020 as part of the action plan. This will not affect 2021 school funding. COGSO will be consulted through that review.</li> </ul>	
<b>Q4</b>	<p><b>How does the department make sure that school councils receive school budget reports (and the right ones) every month?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To enable School Representative Bodies to meet their financial governance requirements, a minimum suite of reports is available in the new School Reporting Tool.</li> <li>• The department has recently launched improved school reporting dashboards which can be used when presenting school financial information to school council. Rollout of the dashboards commenced during Term 4; the dashboards are available to any school whose Business Manager has completed the training.</li> <li>• To ensure the appropriate financial reports are provided to SRBs, the department provides training and has published guidelines on the School Reporting Tool and dashboards which are available to the School Leadership team, including the Business Managers.</li> </ul>	<b>All regions</b>
<b>Q5</b>	<p><b>Would the department consider assigning school-based constables to individual schools on a permanent basis?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services (NTPFES) made the operational decision to re-deploy 10 school-based police officers in Week 10, Term 1, 2020 due to COVID-19 requirements.</li> <li>• A gradual return of school-based police officers commenced on Friday 23 October 2020 with three out of 10 officers returning to Darwin and Palmerston schools. The three officers are available to provide services to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Sanderson Middle School</li> <li>– Dripstone Middle School</li> <li>– Darwin Middle School</li> <li>– Nightcliff Middle School</li> <li>– Palmerston College</li> <li>– Taminmin College</li> <li>– Casuarina Senior College.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• NTPFES and the department are working closely together.</li> </ul>	<b>Darwin</b>

<p><b>Q6</b></p>	<p><b>What is the Department's plan to support large scale infrastructure improvements in remote schools, particularly those that have experienced decades of neglect and are no longer fit for purpose?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NT Government's 10 Year Infrastructure Plan 2020-2029 provides transparency in planning and prioritises strategic infrastructure projects identified to support enhanced learning environments for children across the Territory including at remote schools. The Plan is a publicly available on the internet and reviewed annually.</li> <li>• The Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics is commencing a Strategic Infrastructure Planning and Strategic Asset Management Framework project to establish processes for future investment decision making across Government infrastructure.</li> <li>• The NT Government's Building Better Schools program is currently being delivered through the Department of Education's Minor New Works Program. This program provides schools across the NT including those in remote areas with \$300 000 each to invest in school identified priority infrastructure projects to enhance learning environments.</li> <li>• The Government announced \$10.8M for the construction of 15 pre-fabricated classrooms for NT schools in April, to primarily replace infrastructure deemed beyond repair in some remote communities.</li> <li>• The locations of the new classrooms were determined by need, with replacement of end-of-life infrastructure prioritised. Easing capacity pressures was also a selection priority.</li> <li>• Remote communities will receive 10 classrooms, while five bound for urban sites will accommodate Students with Additional Needs.</li> </ul> <p>The chosen sites are:</p> <p><u>Remote:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alekarenge School (3)</li> <li>• Newcastle Waters School (1)</li> <li>• Gapuwiyak School (2)</li> <li>• Neutral Junction School (1)</li> <li>• Mutitjulu School (1) (Under further assessment – due to site considerations)</li> <li>• Ngukurr School (2)</li> </ul> <p><u>Urban accommodating Students with Additional Needs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nightcliff Primary School - Namarluk Annex (2)</li> <li>• Woodroffe Primary School (3)</li> </ul>	<p><b>All regions</b></p>
<p><b>Q7</b></p>	<p><b>It is abundantly evident among schools in Katherine and school councils that south of the Berrimah line the Education funding seems to stop. Katherine has schools that were built in the 70s and 80s and apart from adhoc upgrades since then currently do not meet the changing needs and vision of education in the 21st century.</b></p> <p><b>Why do schools in Darwin continually get awarded millions of dollars for upgrades when parent councils in Katherine are working their guts out to fundraise, apply for grants and asking local businesses for handouts just so we can improve the infrastructure and facilities at our local Katherine schools.</b></p>	<p><b>Rivers</b></p>

**Surely the awarding of millions of dollars to Darwin middle and senior schools is a clear slap in the face to regional schools across the Territory some of which are still waiting 18 months down the line for assistance with basic road safety infrastructure around their school at a cost of \$180000.**

**Can you explain why Darwin schools are so well supported at the expense of NT regional schools?**

See DoE's response to 2019 Annual Full Council Meeting motions

- Infrastructure planning happens between DE and the Department of Infrastructure Planning and Logistics. We have 153 schools all with high demands for infrastructure upgrades.
- The Government's 10 Year Infrastructure identifies future works across the department in the medium to long term. The plan is reviewed annually.
- This provides transparency in planning and prioritizes projects identified as supporting the future growth and prosperity of the Northern Territory.
- These projects highlight remote infrastructure renewal as identified projects across the regions.
- We are steadily working through what to prioritise. There is a library upgrade. Katherine High is included in the 10 Year plan.

Background Information for CE: Katherine Vs Darwin comparison

- There are 28 schools in the Big Rivers Region, 7 schools in Katherine township, including 1 School of the Air and 1 Special School, 1 High School and 4 Primary Schools.
- The average enrolment for the region is 3 882, with 1 851 of these in the Katherine Township (589 at Katherine High School)
- There are 28 Schools in the Darwin Region with an average enrolment of 11 873 (35% of the average enrolments out of total of 33 864
- The Berrimah Line is an old saying/ construct and refers to Berrimah Road which used to be loosely the old Darwin town boundary. Is essentially includes all Darwin and the Northern Suburbs, and excludes Palmerston and regional.

Other regions outside of Darwin (*Berrimah Line*):

- Total excluding Darwin – average enrolment 21 991 across 125 schools
- Katherine Region – average enrolment – 3 882 across 28 schools
- Top End Region – average enrolment – 9 667 across 35 schools
- East Arnhem – average enrolment – 2 776 across 13 schools
- Barkly Region – average enrolment – 1 285 across 13 schools
- Central Region – average enrolment – 4 381 across 36 schools

**Q8 What steps are in place to improve Principal recruitment?**

**Top End**

- Principal recruitment is supported by a team in the Department of Corporate and Digital Development as part of the broader school leadership initiatives and development programs across the Northern Territory.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently reviewing our Principal Classifications. Only jurisdiction recruits principals to contract employment. Some of our work on this project has dispelled the myth that principals are recruited from interstate. A high percentage are recruited from the Territory. They may have come from interstate as teachers, but have been here before at least two years.</li> <li>• We aim to have a range of supports in place to orientate our principals, provide coaching, mentoring, visits from the School Improvement and Leadership team within the first three weeks of commencement at their school.</li> </ul>	
Q9	<p><b>What is the department doing to recruit and support more aboriginal teachers?</b></p> <p>The Department has a number of initiatives that support the attraction and development of a Northern Territory Aboriginal educator workforce. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Special Measures recruitment plan</i> Implementation of the plan is a key action of the department’s Indigenous Employment and Workforce Strategy 2016-2020 and is aimed at increasing the Aboriginal workforce, including the number of Aboriginal teachers and education professionals. In line with this plan, preference is given to Aboriginal applicants who meet all essential criteria and are suitable at the level of the position for all vacancies advertised on the NTG Careers in Government site, excluding Early Career Programs. This plan includes ‘designated’ roles of Assistant Teachers and Aboriginal Education Officers that must be filled by an Aboriginal person.</li> <li>• <i>Aboriginal Teacher Education Scholarship</i> Offered to Aboriginal Territorians in urban and remote settings who are currently studying or are eligible to enrol in a Bachelor of Education or a Master of Teaching at a Northern Territory tertiary institution. This scholarship provides up to \$15,000 per year to support full-time or part-time studies dependent on course duration. There 30 scholarship recipients currently studying an initial teacher education degree, four scholarship recipients have graduated and an additional four scholarship recipients are on track to graduate in 2020.</li> <li>• <i>Remote Aboriginal Teacher Education Program</i> This new program will provide support for existing and aspiring Aboriginal educators to study teaching and progress their learning and careers while living and working in remote NT settings. A 2021 pilot will start in a small number of sites with cohorts of aspiring teachers who are ready to enter tertiary education and strong community and school leadership support. Through consultation, site specific models will be developed to respond to the needs of each community, education setting and aspiring teacher group. These sites will be announced by end of 2020.</li> <li>• <i>Assistant Teacher Project</i> This project supports Aboriginal Assistant Teachers and classroom support staff to enrol in and undertake accredited training programs that support professional development, and has provided opportunities for the emerging workforce to be employed as school-based trainees. Aboriginal Assistant Teachers and classroom support staff who aspire to become a qualified teacher can be supported through the ATES and RATE programs.</li> </ul>	Darwin

<p><b>Q10</b></p>	<p><b>Can you commit to ensuring that Yolngu Matha is taught as a second language in Nhulunbuy Primary school?</b></p> <p><b>We live in an area with a vibrant Indigenous language that is the first language of many people in the region. It is a shame that children can go through their whole education and not learn any of the language of the region.</b></p>	<p><b>East Arnhem</b></p>
	<p>This is a school decision.</p> <p>All students in the NT have the opportunity to learn a Language or Indigenous Languages and Culture (ILC).</p> <p>The department has an ILC and Bilingual Education team which is made up of senior language resource officers, including for the East Arnhem region.</p> <p>The role of this team is to support schools to deliver ILC programs, including in first and second languages, <u>for those schools who choose to do so.</u></p> <p>In Week 7, Term 4, 2020 the department’s Senior Language Resource Officer for East Arnhem will be working with schools in Yirrkala and can offer an appointment or presentation to the Principal and School Council on the guidelines for implementing and delivering an ILC program, and the support available from the department for schools.</p> <p>Under the current school resourcing model, schools fund ILC programs within their funding provisioning.</p>	
<p><b>Q11<sup>1</sup></b></p>	<p><b>Would it be possible for all Transition children to have an opportunity to have an annual health screening test which included hearing test, sight test, reflex, posture and gait issues, and the checking of height and weight?</b></p> <p><b>These were done in the past and no longer exist. These tests were invaluable for the children, parents and teachers. As it was an official assessment, parents could follow up on the results and teachers modify programs.</b></p>	<p><b>All regions</b></p>
	<p>This is a matter for the Department of Health.</p> <p>The department introduced the NT developed, on-entry screening tool, the Assessment of Student Competencies (ASC) in 2011 for Transition students. The ASC was revised in 2014 following a review by Menzies School of Health and Research.</p> <p>The ASC consists of 47 Competencies grouped into 4 Domains: Motor Skills, Healthy Living, Literacy and Numeracy. It screens non-cognitive behaviours such as gross, fine and perceptual motor skills, self-care skills, as well as early literacy in speaking and listening, reading and writing and aspects of early numeracy, namely number, geometry and measurement. The non-cognitive behaviours are important pre-requisites for learning.</p> <p>In addition to this screening tool, teachers have access to Vision and Hearing checklists developed by the department, which provide teachers with an extensive list of identifiers that may indicate vision or hearing concerns in students that can be shared with health clinicians</p>	

<sup>1</sup> COGSO was not aware that the annual Transition screening had ceased and look forward to an update.

<p><b>Q12</b></p>	<p><b>Queensland conducted a survey of early school leavers, available at <a href="http://www.qld.gov.au/earllyschoollleavers">www.qld.gov.au/earllyschoollleavers</a>. Will the department consider a similar survey of NT early school leavers?</b></p> <p>The department has an internal system for collecting the destination of students when they leave school in Year 12. The system collects information entered by each school which provides a point in time reason for leaving the education system. A comprehensive system that tracks students post school would require significant planning and development and is not currently planned.</p>	<p><b>All regions</b></p>
<p><b>Q13</b></p>	<p><b>Digital devices are the main source of distraction for secondary students, the main instrument of bullying, a significant factor in restricted cognitive development.</b></p> <p><b>How close are we to a meaningful policy?</b></p> <p>See 14 below.</p>	<p><b>All regions</b></p>
<p><b>Q14</b></p>	<p><b>Why hasn't the NT Department of Education placed restrictions or bans on student's use of mobile phones in schools?</b></p> <p>An outright ban on mobile phones fails to take into account the many ways in which they can enhance learning. Responsible use of technology, such as mobile phones, is an important life skill for young people.'</p> <p>This was the government's response to Election Ask 17 in the recent NT election.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Mobile phones and electronic devices in the school environment policy and guidelines are publically available on the NT department School policies webpage</li> <li>• The policy requires that schools put in place procedures to govern the acceptable use of mobile phones in the school environment.</li> </ul> <p>The guidelines provide information to assist schools to develop their procedures.</p>	<p><b>Darwin</b></p>
<p><b>Q15</b></p>	<p><b>Why can't we offer work experience/apprenticeships starting in Year 9 for those students who academically do not wish to go to University or cannot afford to go?</b></p> <p>The NT offers vocational education and training to Year 9 students.</p> <p>Work experience and apprenticeships are usually only offered when the child turns 15.</p> <p>It is more about the age of the student rather than the year level.</p> <p>The work experience policy states;  <i>'Students undertaking work experience placement will generally be 15 years of age or older. School Principals may provide authorisation for a student at the age of 14 to undertake a placement where they are satisfied that the student has the maturity and competence to safely derive benefit from the placement'</i></p> <p>Structured work placement aligned to a VET qualification is similar.</p> <p>Guidelines for Australian Apprenticeships and Traineeships state that a student must be at least 15 years old to apply for one and must have an employer willing to take them on.</p>	<p><b>Barkly Central</b></p>

Q16	<p><b>Based on published and anecdotal evidence is there any likelihood that the current structuring of high school into middle and senior schooling would ever be reviewed and possibly reversed?</b></p>	All regions
<p>This is a policy decision for the NT Government.</p> <p>Future Directions for Secondary Education in the NT of 2003 recommended the establishment of two clear stages of secondary schooling. This resulted in the transition to middle schools from 2007/8. A Middle Years Review was undertaken in 2014 by Vic Zbar. At this point, no change to this policy is proposed.</p> <p>Our job is to make this policy position effective. Palmerston College has both middle and senior campuses; Darwin High and Middle are located in the same precinct – our work must be about how we support transitions.</p>		
Q17	<p><b>In light of both published and anecdotal evidence, that having high schools split into middle and senior school settings is detrimental to student (and teacher) outcomes across a range of factors;</b></p> <p><b>Would there be any possibility about reviewing and reversing the structuring of high schools?</b></p>	All regions
<p>This is a policy decision for the NT Government.</p>		
Q18	<p><b>When will DoE recognise the failure of the middle schools model that has resulted in disenfranchised sections of the community and a culture of competition between public schools?</b></p>	Top End Darwin
<p>This is a policy decision for the NT Government</p>		
Q19 <sup>2</sup>	<p><b>"Mums Can, Dads Can" &amp; "Boys can, Girls Can". Project like this is looking at rigid gender stereotypes and changing attitudes and beliefs. Like "Mums and Dads can be Equal"</b></p> <p><b>Implementing programs like this one, my Question is; ' can we Implement a project like this in schools, and what are your thoughts'?</b></p> <p>The NT Social and Emotional Learning Resources (NT SEL) are designed to assist teachers to support the social and emotional learning of students in all stages of schooling. The key NT SEL topics include gender identity and positive gender relations, including challenging gender stereotypes, amongst other topics such as positive coping, problem solving, stress management and help seeking.</p> <p>The department is also developing a policy on gender diversity in schools. The policy will include positions on challenging rigid gender stereotypes and roles in the treatment of students, and the teaching of programs that acknowledge diverse gender identifies, roles and stereotypes.</p>	All regions

<sup>2</sup> Mums Can, Dads Can project relates to a Tangentyre family, domestic and sexual violence prevention program

	Not fond of adding more programs – we have an Australian Curriculum – sometimes we need resources to support implementation.	
<b>Q20<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Fundamental approach, can we incorporate Character Education into the curriculum?</b>	<b>All regions</b>
	Education is all about values. The department offers the Australian Curriculum – and to receive Commonwealth funding all schools need to implement this framework. The curriculum has a 3 dimensional design including discipline knowledge; skills and understanding alongside general capabilities and cross curriculum priorities. GC include critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, ethical understanding, intercultural understanding as well as literacy and numeracy.	

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<sup>3</sup> New issue raised. In January 2005, Queensland received Commonwealth funding to develop an inter-systemic project titled Values Education Project to support state schools in planning and holding their values education school forums.