

1. MASTER PLAN AND ACOUSTIC UPGRADES

If elected, will you commit to immediate funding to complete the school Master Plans for:

- Yuendumu School,
- Tennant Creek High School, and
- Katherine High School.

In addition, will your party commit to this immediate infrastructure funding to ensure all general learning areas are upgraded to Australian Acoustic Standards for:

- Yuendumu School,
- Tennant Creek High School, and
- Katherine High School.

Quality infrastructure is important to meet the needs of students now and into the future. It is disappointing that investing in Government education infrastructure was not a priority of the former CLP Government.

Every school has areas of need and it is the responsibility of government to balance that need against funding availability. That is why our Territory Labor Government introduced the 10 Year Infrastructure Plan to provide fairness and transparency in planning for projects right across the Territory, including in schools. The Plan is reviewed and updated annually by DIPL, who have oversight of all government assets, including capacity and condition considerations.

All of these schools have infrastructure projects in the 10 Year Infrastructure Plan.

	Time frame	Project description
Tennant Creek High School	Underway Design process is nearing completion	\$2 million Tennant Creek Engagement Centre to support both Clontarf and Stars programs
Katherine High School	Medium term project	STEAM centre, as part of school Master Plan
Yuendumu School	Medium to long term	New school infrastructure, informed by school Master Plan

Our government continues to roll out the BBS program which provides all Territory schools \$300 000 to spend on the infrastructure project of their choice. So far 145 schools have completed or have projects underway through the BBS program.

Under the BBS program, Yuendumu built a bus shed and replaced their boundary fence, Katherine High are in the process of upgrades to their library and Tennant Creek High plan upgrades to the Juno Centre and other classroom upgrades.

In addition to this, all three of these schools have also been included in the Roof Top Solar program. Katherine High has already completed their solar project and panel installation will happen this financial year at Tennant Creek. Yuendumu solar panels will be installed in the third round. It is estimated that schools will save up to 40% on their power bills as a result of these roof top solar panels. These savings will be retained by the school as part of their global school budget and schools will be able to prioritise and redirect these savings into other projects that meet the needs of their student cohort.

In early 2020, our Territory Labor government also announced additional funding of \$5.2 million for inclusive infrastructure upgrades, the *Building for Inclusion* program, which has enabled schools to upgrade teaching and learning areas to better support students with additional needs.

The *Building for Inclusion* funding has given schools across the Territory the power to choose the infrastructure upgrades most needed by their students.

Through this program, twenty-six schools have been able to make upgrades to classroom acoustics or installed Soundfield systems to better support students with hearing difficulties. This includes Tennant Creek High School, which undertook acoustic upgrades to one classroom. Through our COVID-19 stimulus, a further 75 classrooms will receive acoustic upgrades.

The *Building for Inclusion* program sits under the *Framework for Inclusion*, which was launched in 2019 and has been developed to emphasis shared decision-making with families and other agencies.

A re-elected Territory Labor Government will continue to focus our cross-government efforts in regards to Hearing Health. This will include Department of Education, Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics, Department of Health and Menzies Research continuing to work together to determine support options for Yuendumu School, Tennant Creek and Katherine High School and to investigate and prioritise appropriate potential sites for acoustic upgrades.

Our Territory Labor Government has worked hard to expand the Families as First Teachers program and, by the end of 2020, there will be 57 FaFT sites around the Territory which is more than double the number of FaFT sites since 2016. The FaFT program provides an opportunity for education staff to apply the ASQ TRAK tool, which assesses children's developmental achievements. This allows the early identification and intervention where a child is starting to fall behind other children their age, including due to hearing loss.

By investing in support for students with additional needs, our Labor Government is helping to break down barriers and giving every child the equal opportunity they deserve to engage in their learning and achieve a bright future.

2-3 - SCHOOL BASED POLICE

2. *If elected, will you adequately resource NT Police to reinstate the School Based Police Program and ensure School Based Police return and remain in schools?*
3. *If elected, how much additional funding will you provide to NT Police for the expansion of the School Based Policing program for additional School Based Police for all primary and high schools across the NT? This additional funding must maintain School Based Police positions, in schools, 5 days a week.*

Our Territory Labor Government worked closely with COGSO to reinstate the School Based Police program after the CLP cut it and we remain committed to it.

Due to operational requirements at the beginning of 2020 and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic the requirement to redeploy School Based Police Officers to alternative duties remains. The intention is to return officers to schools and expand the program as soon as the emergency response to the pandemic can allow for this occur. To ensure our police force can remain as strong and supported as possible through this pandemic, the Territory Labor Government recently committed an additional \$20 million for the employment of 131 extra staff, training and resources. If re-elected, our government will continue to invest in programs and services to support Territorians.

If re-elected, our government will continue to work with COGSO to expand and improve the School Based Police Program. Northern Territory agency budgets will be finalised with the budget to be delivered in November.

4. BARKLY REGION STRATEGIC PLAN

If elected, will you commit to work with all Barkly schools to develop a Strategic Plan for the region that includes, but is not limited to future needs; infrastructure; and individual school masterplans?

The Barkly Regional Deal, between the Federal government, Northern Territory Government and the Barkly Regional Council, commits the three levels of government to work together with the broader community to respond to community-identified priorities to improve economic and social outcomes in the region. Under this deal, the Federal Government has committed capital funding for the construction of a 40 bed student boarding accommodation for students in Tennant Creek and outlying communities. The Northern Territory Government will be responsible for the ongoing operations and management of the facility, including intensive case management, wrap-around social support services and the provision of suitable land. Governments will undertake community consultation to inform the design of the student accommodation facility and a broader school attendance strategy to ensure the suite of measures is responsive to the identified needs and service gaps in the Barkly region.

On coming to government, we committed \$2 million to implement programs to improve educational outcomes in the Big Rivers and Barkly regions through an integrated program of sports, arts, social and emotional learning, culture, language and learning for country for remote secondary students at risk of disengaging from school and their communities.

The Healthy Life, Creative Life program is run through the Juno Centre in Tennant Creek and provides alternative pathways for middle and senior year's students who are at risk of disengaging. The Juno Centre integrates existing Aboriginal education strategies and VET programs and connects youth service providers in the region. A total of 546 student visits occurred in Term 1 2020, with students attending from Tennant Creek High School, Ntaria and Alice Springs schools.

The newly constructed preschool and integrated child and family centre at Tennant Creek Primary School has been in operation since late 2019.

A Barkly Attendance Strategy is being developed to coordinate support for students who are not fully engaged in their schooling.

Through the Barkly Regional Coordination Committee, Tennant Creek Interagency Family and Youth Operational Framework, Yangkan and Ngappa Group and Family Safety Framework, the Department of Education maintains close partnerships with other agencies for coordinated services and support, including collaboration and sharing information.

We have invested \$2 million for a new Tennant Creek Engagement Centre to support both Clontarf and Stars programs at the Tennant Creek High School. The design process is nearing completion for this project.

One of our election commitments on coming to government was to ensure that all secondary schools have clear master plans to guide planning and infrastructure development. We'll continue to work with schools to develop these plans.

5. NTG FUNDED STUDENT TRANSPORT TO BOTH TENNANT CREEK HIGH AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS

If elected, will you commit to providing free student public transport to both Tennant Creek Primary and High Schools?

Currently funded by Tennant Creek School budgets which has no provision for transport.

If re-elected, our Territory Labor Government will work to explore options for transport solutions for Tennant Creek students.

6. KATHERINE FLEXIBLE LEARNING EDUCATION CENTRE

If elected, will you commit to providing ongoing funding to Katherine High School for the continued operation of the Katherine Flexible Learning Education Centre (KFLEC), to ensure that this campus and service is a permanent facility supporting students and families in the Katherine Region?

This funding must be in addition and separate to the school's global budget and within separate reporting.

Our Territory Labor Government established the Katherine Flexible Learning Centre and remains committed to it, because we believe that students with complex and additional needs should be supported to remain engaged in their learning.

On coming to government, we committed \$2 million to implement programs to improve educational outcomes in the Big Rivers and Barkly regions through an integrated program of sports, arts, social and emotional learning, culture, language and learning for country for remote secondary students at risk of disengaging from school and their communities.

The Katherine Flexible Learning Centre continues to provide early intervention support for disengaged youth in the region and around 26 students are currently enrolled, with capacity for more students.

On coming to government, our government reviewed Global School Budgets and made sure schools were fairly and transparently resourced. Our Labor Government needed to fund an extra \$20 million every year straight into school budgets to replace the teachers and programs cut by the CLP. Our government supports schools having the autonomy to make the decisions necessary to meet the needs of their school communities.

7. EQUITY OF FUNDING FOR HIGH NEEDS STUDENTS WITH NO ACCESS TO SPECIALIST SCHOOLS

If elected, will you commit to equitable levels of funding for students with a disability who have to be in a mainstream school as they have no access to a special school?

As they have to attend a mainstream school, they do not receive the same level of funding as students who attend a specialist school.

Last year, the Territory Labor Government launched the *Framework for Inclusion* to provide high quality, inclusive education for children with additional needs and to help build the capacity of teachers and support staff in inclusive education practices across mainstream schools. Since that time, the Territory Labor Government has invested \$73.4 million to deliver targeted support for students with additional needs in mainstream schools and an additional \$20.3 million to employ advisors, school counsellors, speech therapists and other staff to support student learning.

Under this framework, we have introduced the Building Collaborative Capacity Program, which aims to build capacity and capability in inclusive practices across mainstream schools. A trial has been established with three groups of schools (20 schools in total) to work together in building the understanding and practices of educators to support all students, including students with additional needs in their learning and continual improvements to differentiated learning practices. Each group receives \$300 000 per year for three years to develop strong, place-based inclusive practices that meet the needs of their students.

In 2020, the Territory Labor Government has invested an additional \$4.3 million ongoing in direct school funding to support students with additional needs. This includes:

- \$1.5 million in 2020 to support the introduction of a needs-based funding model that reduces the administrative burden for schools by using data already collected in schools through the National Consistent Collection of Data for Students with Disability (NCCD), which is based on the professional judgment of teachers, and
- A further \$2.8 million in ongoing funding to provide schools with greater capacity in deciding how to use their funding to make the necessary adjustments to meet the specific learning needs of all students. These funds can be used to deliver programs, buy special equipment, and employ additional staff or to provide release time for teachers to attend professional development.

Through the *Building for Inclusion* program, the Territory Labor Government has recognised the importance of ensuring our Territory schools are well equipped with contemporary infrastructure to best support and improve the social and academic development of all students.

8. FUNDING FOR STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

If elected, will you commit to funding government schools for every student with additional needs based on enrolment and not attendance.

On coming to government, we undertook to audit and assess the global school budgeting funding to ensure schools would have a funding model that meets student need and provides schools with flexibility, budget certainty and improved support.

An independent review of the global school budget funding model was undertaken, informed by extensive consultation with schools and other stakeholders, including the NT Principals' Association, COGSO, the Australian Education Union and the Community and Public Sector Union. This review found that funding for government education had been cut by around 10% by the CLP, despite student numbers remaining steady over that same period. All recommendations of this review were accepted, with implementation over three years through the 'School Resourcing Model – Action Plan for the Future'.

The Action Plan will deliver projects under four key themes of better support for schools through targeted investment, improving budget certainty for schools, better budget management, and targeted funding to student need. Through this process, our Territory Labor Government introduced a new weighting system to provide more per student funding for those students who have English as a Second Language and students with a disability.

There's always more to be done, but we're committed to doing it. A re-elected Territory Labor Government will undertake a mid-implementation review of the School Resourcing Model to explore opportunities for improvements and more efficient allocation of resources.

9. COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND PRIORITY CHANGE

If elected, will you commit to changing the priorities of Community Benefit Funding from Infrastructure to addressing the mental health and wellbeing of Territorians?

This would recognise that Community Benefit Funding is generated through a 10% levy applied to electronic gaming machine losses, which have significant negative social consequences as a direct result of problem gambling.

The Community Benefit Fund grant program has been running successfully since 2008 and was most recently reviewed in 2018.

Through the Community Benefit Fund grants, funding is available for a range of projects and programs, including through the Gambling Amelioration grants which provide funding to support the promotion of community awareness and education in respect of problem gambling, including counselling, rehabilitation and support services for problem gamblers and their families.

Funding is available through the minor and major community grants for those projects that seek to improve the capacity of not-for-profit organisations to provide services, leisure activities and opportunities to Territorians. Infrastructure projects put back into the community through job creation, facility and equipment upgrades for not-for profits, and provide activities that families can enjoy together.

10-12 – SCHOOL COUNSELLORS

10. Will your party commit to providing all schools with adequate access to a trained counsellor/psychologist on a full-time basis to assist teachers to work with students who are facing adversity or are demonstrating mental health challenges?

11. If elected, will you commit to the provision of full-time counsellors to meet all remote student's mental health needs?

12. If elected, will you commit to providing centrally funded school counsellors onsite at all primary schools to enable early support to students, families and staff in developing positive mental health through trauma informed approaches/practices?

On coming to government, we committed to undertake a study to determine the right number and placement of school counsellors to meet the needs of students identified in the *Gone Too Soon* Parliamentary enquiry. During this term of government we've reviewed and made more effective allocations to the school counsellor program, through the *School Counselling Action Plan 2019-2023*. We currently have 25 school counsellors with 2 senior school counsellors. In addition, 6 schools utilise part of their Global School Budget to employ school counsellors.

Student support services were deeply impacted by the former CLP Government's cuts to education. The former CLP government undertook two substantial rounds of cuts to the Student Services division, including a round of cuts in 2012-13 which cut \$280 000 from a grant program for schools to purchase specialist equipment and run programs for students with additional needs, and \$106 000 from a grant program to assist schools with the management of individual students exhibiting behavioural issues. Therefore, it is acknowledged that this is an area in which we need to continue to invest and make improvements and a re-elected Territory Labor Government will continue to do so.

One of the positives to come out of the national COVID response has been the increased ease of accessing telehealth services through Medicare. This is an option of which our Territory Labor Government remains supportive and will seek to see ongoing improvements to accessibility in this regard.

We remain committed to School Counsellors in our schools. A re-elected Territory Labor Government will commit to review the School Counselling Action Plan in conjunction with the draft Mental Health Productivity Commission report recommendations. This review should also consider if the current model of staffing supports the school population and need.

13. DISCRIMINATION WITHIN FAITH-BASED EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

If elected, will you commit to opposing exemptions in Territory and Commonwealth legislation which allow faith-based educational institutions to discriminate against students, teachers or staff on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status?

Everyone should feel welcome and be safe at school.

The NT *Anti-Discrimination Act* needs updating and a re-elected Territory Labor Government is committed to modernising this legislation. A review was commenced of the *Anti-Discrimination Act*, but ultimately this review is awaiting the outcome of the review being undertaken by the Federal Government.

14. ALLIED HEALTH - SPEECH PATHOLOGIST SUPPORT

If elected, will you commit to increasing the number of Speech Pathologists working in schools, to increase the opportunity for early intervention and better outcomes for Territory children?

When we came to government, we found that the CLP had cut more than 500 teachers and support staff. That was 302 teachers, 71 school admin staff and 135 non-school based staff, including from regional offices and student support services.

Through our *Framework for Inclusion*, we invested \$20.3 million in 2019 to employ advisors, school counsellors, speech therapists and other staff to support student learning.

We have delivered an additional \$8 million every year in support for students with additional needs. This included the establishment of a multi-disciplinary team to support early intervention approaches for students with a disability and the expansion of the Autism Spectrum Disorder program. Through the *Building for Inclusion* program, \$440 000 has been invested to establish annexes to support students with autism at twelve schools.

Over 50 Territory teachers have received a “Supporting Students with Additional Needs” teaching scholarship to improve the way we are supporting and identifying students who need extra support in mainstream classes.

Access to high quality, inclusive education is key to creating a bright future for all children and students and is the foundation of a thriving community and a strong economy in the Northern Territory. If re-elected, a Territory Labor Government will continue to work to improve access to these important services.

15. CASE MANAGEMENT - FRAMEWORK FOR STUDENTS AT RISK

If elected, will you commit to the development of a collaborative framework for the Departments of Education, Families, Health and NT Police, supported by detailed service guidelines, to enable effective case management of at-risk students and their families?

Placing the best interest of children at the heart of our decision making has been a guiding principle of our Territory Labor Government. To focus this approach, the Territory Labor Government established a Cabinet sub-committee on Children, through which the Ministers for Children, Education, Territory Families, Health and Police, the Chief Executives of the Departments of Education, Territory Families, Health and the Commissioner for Police work to take an holistic approach to a child’s wellbeing and family engagement. If re-elected, we will continue this established protocol.

We know that the early years are the most important years and this has been a key focus of our Territory Labor Government over the last 4 years. If re-elected, we’ll strengthen this focus with early intervention in the early years by providing wrap around support for Year 1 students. No Year 1 student should be in a situation where they need to be suspended. Where a Year 1 student is presenting with challenging behaviours, an immediate response of support services will be triggered will ensure students remain engaged during the early years.

16. REMOTE ABORIGINAL TEACHER EDUCATION (RATE)

If elected, will you commit to reinstating and retaining from Term 1 2021, the Remote Aboriginal Teacher Education (RATE) program and if yes, how will you fund it to ensure adequate, on the ground support for those participating?

What steps would be taken to consult regarding design and implementation of a re-established RATE program?

A re-elected Territory Labor Government will re-establish a new RATE program.

The RATE program operated in the 1980s and 1990s in many remote communities across the Territory. RATE students from that era continue to work in their community schools as Assistant Teachers and fully qualified and registered teachers.

Many went on to become Senior Teachers and School Principals in communities such as Ngukurr, Numbulwar, Yirrkala, Yirrkala Homelands, Galiwin'ku, Gapuwiyak, Milingimbi, Gunbalanya, Pigeon Hole, Alekerenge, Areyonga and Yuendumu.

The CLP Government cut \$225 000 from teacher training programs when they discontinued the Remote Indigenous Training Education (RITE) Program in 2012.

The re-established RATE program will enable existing and aspiring Aboriginal educators to progress their learning and careers while working in remote NT schools. For those wishing to become fully qualified teachers, this program will provide a supported head start to their teaching journey.

The Department of Education leads a RATE Steering Committee comprising the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment, the Department of the Chief Minister, the Department of Trade, Business and Innovation, Charles Darwin University, Batchelor Institute and the Teacher Registration Board to develop the pilot program, which will launch in 2021 and be informed by research, trials and consultation with relevant stakeholder groups.

The RATE program aligns with the Territory Labor Government's Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Strategy, which includes our commitment to employ 500 more Aboriginal police, nurses and teachers by 2026.

In addition to the RATE program, a re-elected Territory Labor Government will introduce a partnership program specifically targeting Aboriginal secondary students, their parents, schools and the business community. This will initially focus on five key employment areas: Teaching; Engineering; Defence; Space and Cyber Security; Financial Services and Health Services.

17. MOBILE PHONE USE IN SCHOOLS

Several Australian states, and democratically governed countries, have concluded from peer reviewed research that banning Mobile Phones in classrooms from first bell until last bell conveys academic, social and psychological advantages to the students.

Further, such bans have been shown to reduce both the psychosocial and academic workloads of teachers.

If elected will you commit to commissioning an independent, professional survey of DoE staff, parents and students as to whether they would support a ban on mobile phones in classrooms from first bell until last bell. If there is consensus for a ban, would you legislate or mandate for this?

The Territory Labor Government has a zero tolerance approach to bullying, including cyber-bullying.

Territory schools are required to put in place policies and procedures governing the use of electronic devices in the classroom, including mobile phones, and schools should retain this autonomy.

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.

Cyber safety and tackling cyber bullying is a key focus in NT schools, and is being addressed with a number of local programs, including the Dolly's Dream eSmart program, developed by the parents of young bullying victim Dolly Everett.