

ACACIA IN ACTION

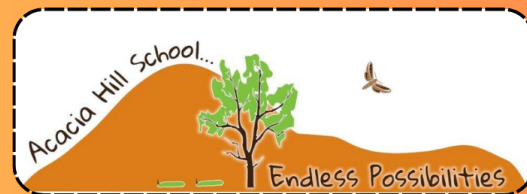
NEWSLETTER

Confident

Community

Caring

Connected



WEEK 6 TERM 2

23 MAY 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

Several people have mentioned to me in recent times how well things are going at Acacia Hill School this year. In general, students are happy and playing and relating to each other kindly. From time to time when there are issues, there are students who actively reconcile with each other, then play happily together after that. Last year, this would have been difficult for those students. I am proud of the staff team at Acacia, and we also have a great parent/carer community – that's you! Everyone has a part in the success of our young people.

School Council

Sadly, our School Council Chair, Julia Anderson, has resigned from Council due to time pressures. A huge thank you to Julia for her leadership of School Council since the beginning of last year. I am thankful to Rainer Balzer, who is interim Chair until a new chair is elected. We had a very successful meeting recently. A supplier was agreed upon to replace the soft fall under the liberty swing, and another to place shade sail over the basketball hoop so it can be used in hot weather. Some of the school's reserve money is going to be used to install solar cells and a battery. Being a large entity, Acacia's electricity bills are high, so it makes complete sense to harness free and clean energy from the sun to power our school.

Attendance

Our attendance which was on an upward trajectory last term has gone down to 65% over the first four weeks of this term. This is partly accounted for by more sickness around in the colder weather. A member of the Attendance and Inclusion Team will now be meeting with us at Acacia once every week or two and will help follow up students with very low attendance.

Centralian Today

I hope you saw the almost full page devoted to Acacia Hill School in this week's *Centralian Today*! There is an article from Teacher Carolyn Balanay, and another article about the liberty swing and the \$10,000 grant from Variety Queensland towards replacing the old, cracked soft fall under the liberty swing. Variety Queensland, ABC News and *Centralian Today* visited Acacia last week, had a look at the liberty swing and the soft fall which is being replaced, and learned from teacher Marica Neubauer how the liberty swing can be used for calming when a child is dysregulated, for a "choosing activity" for Preschoolers, and as a "Working For" – first do some work, then have a swing. Of course, it is also used just for fun! Students in wheelchairs, for example, all love to spend time in the liberty swing.

World Teachers' Day NT Awards

The closing date for nominations for World Teachers' Day NT Awards has been extended to Monday 26th May. If you haven't already, I encourage you to nominate a staff member of Acacia Hill School! Nominations can be submitted on the [World Teachers' Day Awards](#) website.

Staff

Sadly, we farewell two staff this week. Kathryn Clifford has been a much loved SESO at Acacia since August 2014! So many staff and students have known Kathryn over this 11 years. Kathryn is about to move down south. We wish Kathryn the very best... we hope she will come back for some visits. We also farewell John Matthews, who came to Acacia last year in the role of Associate Principal. John has undertaken some excellent work on a Data Plan for Acacia, and has started the journey of moving the school to the data management system, GradeXpert. John has won a principal position at a remote Studio School (Year 10-12) in WA. I know John will be an excellent person for that role. We welcome two new staff: Rajni Kumari, who joins us as a SESO, and Kate Phosung, who joins us as a relief SESO. Congratulations to Stephanie Bell, who has won the position of Home Liaison Officer permanently!

Emergency drills

We had an emergency evacuation drill last Thursday. Of course, an emergency evacuation can be very tricky in a special school, with loud noises and a break from usual routine. However, staff prepared the students really well. The whole drill went so quickly and smoothly I could hardly believe it! I was all finished and everyone was quietly walking back to class within 8 minutes!

Kindest wishes,

Julie

DATES COMING UP

- 10:30am Thursday 12th June - School Council
- Whole Day Friday 6th June - Satellite Classes Excursion to Desert Park
- 10:30am Friday 30th May - Primary School AFL Carnival at Yirara
- Term 3 - Tuesday 15th July to Friday 19th September
- Wednesday 4th June - Lockdown drill
- Term 4 - Tuesday 7th October to Thursday 11th December



Room 18 CSC

Acacia Hill Seniors at Centralian Senior college have had an amazing term 2. Some of the activities that the Senior students participate in outside of the classroom are community access, swimming, boxing and volunteering at Olive Pink botanical gardens. Community access for our seniors involves research, teamwork and a lot of group discussion before we undertake our hospitality cooking and shopping.

The Seniors go to the town pool where they learn under our amazing swimming instructor from Acacia. They learn about water safety and they have grown from strength to strength individually and as a team.

Boxing has become a favorite session each week. Working on balance, core strength, hand and eye coordination and general fitness. Coach Mark runs boxing exercises at Acacia Hill school which allows room 18 to connect in with Room 11.

The senior students also volunteer at Olive Pink Botanical Gardens. Where they work alongside the ranger and learn about the native plants and weeds. Last visit the students removed buffel grass, creating space for the native flowers and grasses to grow.

Room 18 senior students have been doing amazing work in the classroom, including the *Read Write Inc: FreshStart* Program and BTN news. The students in Room 18 love to learn, grow together as a team, care for each other and connect to our community.

Diana, Haili and Jodie



Allergy Alert: students at Acacia Hill have nut allergies and other serious eating conditions



Review of Secondary Education

Resulting from the recent review of secondary education, NT DET is moving away from the Middle Years structure and back to comprehensive 7-12 high schools. The proposal for Alice Springs is that CMS will become a 7-12 high school and CSC will become an industry, trade and flexible education hub. There definitely won't be two 7-12 government high schools. There is time right now to give feedback on this proposal, at [Reforming secondary education – Alice Springs](#). We are encouraging the parents and carers of our Year 6 students to do this survey (see next page), as it will potentially affect their young people.

Variety gives a push to Acacia Hill's favourite swing



Students and staff at Acacia Hill School had something special to celebrate this week, with a \$10,000 donation from Variety Queensland to support upgrades to the school's liberty swing.

ABC News and The Centralian Advocate were on hand as Principal Julie Permezel welcomed Variety Queensland to the school for a morning of smiles, photos and gratitude.

The funds will go directly towards repairing the soft fall beneath the swing, which is a much-loved and much-used feature of the school grounds. Designed to support all children, including those in wheelchairs, the swing plays a vital role at Acacia Hill, catering for students with intellectual and multiple complex disabilities.

"One hundred percent of our junior students and all our students who are in wheelchairs use the liberty swing," said Ms Permezel. "It's extremely important. I'm very thankful to Variety for the donation."

The swing is not only a source of fun but also a powerful motivator. Many students, including those who are non-verbal or use wheelchairs, work towards swing time as a reward, making it an integral part of learning and wellbeing at the school.

Support for Families and contact details

Autism Advisory Line: 24/7; Run by families of children with autism; 1300 22 777

Autism NT: 8948 4424; NT Mental Health Line: 1800 682 288; E-headspace: 1800 650 890; Kidshelpline: 1800 55 1800

FACES: 8:00AM-8:00PM Monday to Friday; parenting support, budgeting support; Referral for services; 1800 999 900

Parentline: Access to counsellors Monday to Friday 8:00am-10:00pm; 1300 301 300

13 YARN counselling (First Nations): 13 92 76

Relationships Australia sometimes sees children if they have the capacity to cater for the individual. There is a phone intake process in which they determine if they have the capacity. Family must pay for the service. The fee varies according to family income. Contact number is 8950 4100.

Dolly's Dream Support Line is now available to families and students 24/7, providing them with access to qualified counsellors for free and without a referral. To access this service, call or text 0488 881 033 or use this webchat.

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Reforming secondary education – Alice Springs

The Northern Territory Government is committed to delivering on its vision to provide:

- An **excellent and equitable** secondary system that supports all students to achieve.
- A **guaranteed standard of local secondary school provision**, and a pathway to NTCET completion for all students, regardless of geographic location.
- A **model of delivery that is differentiated**, and informed by student and community need and industry pathways.
- An engaging learning design that **guarantees core literacy, numeracy and work readiness skills and drives improvements in student attendance and wellbeing**.
- A **shift away from middle schools** as a key NT government election commitment

Our reforms will build the aspirations and skills of young people so that their secondary schooling sets them up for future careers and meets the needs of the Territory.

What is the proposed future design for secondary education in Alice Springs?

The proposed future design of secondary education in Alice Springs is to **create one comprehensive secondary school (7-12) and one Regional Industry, Trade and Flexible Education Hub**.

It is proposed that the comprehensive secondary school will be at the current Centralian Middle School site; and the Industry, Trade and Flexible Education Hub will be at the current Centralian Senior College.

The creation of the comprehensive school and regional education hub would provide the following benefits:

1. reduce transition points for secondary students. Students will be able to complete year 12 where they start year 7, which will enable greater continuity of learning and relationships for students and teachers;
2. capacity to best serve the local school community and broader community of students outside Alice Springs as a regional hub;
3. enable greater specialisation and connections into industry and jobs through a fit for purpose Industry/Trade and Flexible Education Hub;
4. build on and learn from the flexible learning models already underway in Alice Springs;
5. provide career pathways and development opportunities for staff.

How are we planning for this change?

There is significant detail and planning needed to prepare for the future of secondary education in Alice Springs.

We are currently engaging with parents, students and staff to obtain feedback on the proposed future design. At the end of Term 1, we will collate this feedback to enable government to make a decision on the future design.

By June 2025, all students, parents and staff will know:

- the finalised future design for secondary education in Alice Springs;
- the plan to support students to transition into the new schools and settings;
- approach to managing staff changes and professional development opportunities for staff.

In Semester 2, 2025 further detailed planning will occur to ensure students, staff and school communities are ready to begin the transition to the future state of secondary education.

From Term 1, 2026, changes will begin in a sequenced and carefully managed way, ensuring students and staff are supported. These changes will be managed to minimise disruption for students. The full transition to the new design of secondary education in Alice Springs will be completed by 2028.

Throughout this exciting but significant change process, the Department of Education and Training will provide the appropriate supports for schools, students, teachers and communities to ensure a smooth transition process.

How are we engaging with the school community?

Engagement with school staff and school communities in Alice Springs will run over the next several weeks. This will enable parents, school staff and students to provide input to help shape the future design of secondary education in Alice Springs.

The Department has commenced engagement through:

- a staff meeting at Centralian Senior College on 17 March 2025 and school council meeting on 18 March 2025
- a staff meeting at Centralian Middle School on 18 March 2025 and school council meeting on 20 March 2025.

A short survey has been developed to capture as many perspectives as possible. This survey is available until 16 April 2025 at <https://forms.office.com/r/YMvADrz3K6?origin=lprLink> or through the QR code below:



For a copy of the *Review of Secondary Education in the NT* or more information on the plan for delivering secondary reform, visit www.education.nt.gov.au/secondary-education. Alternatively, if you would like to be in touch about the change email secondaryreform.doe@education.nt.gov.au.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What are the benefits of moving away from middle schools?

Through consultation with teachers, parents and students, the *Review of Secondary Education in the NT* found that the middle school model in the NT isn't maximising outcomes for students. Moving to comprehensive schools will reduce the transition points for students and support greater continuity of relationships and learning. It will provide teachers with wider professional opportunities and provide more opportunities for schools to specialise.

Q. What pathways will be offered to students in Darwin, Palmerston and Alice Springs?

All comprehensive schools in Darwin, Palmerston and Alice Springs will provide the full Australian Curriculum (year 7-10) and a core range of NT Certificate of Education and Training subjects and pathways (year 10-12) that will set students up to pursue post-school education, training and jobs.

Schools within each region will work together to identify specialisations and approaches to working as a network of schools to ensure all students can access a wide range of pathways regardless of their home school. The focus of individual schools will be released alongside the final school design in mid 2025.

Q. How will priority enrolment areas change with the shift away from middle schools?

All students in Darwin, Palmerston and Alice Springs will have access to high quality government secondary education and a wide range of pathways, regardless of where they live.

Providing flexibility and options for families will continue to be an important part of secondary education in the Territory. There is no proposal to change the current priority enrolment policy where families and students are able to pursue opportunities and pathways at schools outside the area that they live.

Q. Will additional funding be available to support this change?

In 2024, the Northern Territory Government signed the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement* with the Commonwealth Government, providing a significant funding uplift to schools from 2025 to 2029. The funding uplift under this agreement will support the transition to the new secondary system.

Q. How will teachers be supported to prepare for teaching new subjects and year levels?

The shift away from middle schools provides our teachers with exciting opportunities to diversify the year -levels and subjects they teach and deepen the connections with students from 7-12. Professional development will be provided to current middle school teachers to prepare for teaching NTCET subjects, and to support current senior secondary school teachers to enhance their understanding of middle years' teaching and learning approaches.

Q. Will there be investment in infrastructure to support the change away from middle schools?

The Department of Education and Training is currently working with the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure to assess existing facilities at middle and senior secondary schools and to identify any minor or major works that would be required to deliver comprehensive school education. This may include upgrades to science facilities and new facilities for technical specialisations.

Central Australia Suicide Prevention Forum

WORKING TOGETHER TO KEEP EVERYONE SAFE

Tuesday 17 June 2025 8:30am - 4:00pm

Wednesday 18 June 2025 8:30am - 4:30pm

📍 Alice Springs Desert Park - Red Mulga Room

Connecting
communities, sharing
local solutions and
working together to
prevent suicide

Register now:

<https://events.humanitix.com/central-australian-suicide-prevention-forum-2025>



FOR MORE INFO, VISIT: nhw4kids.org.au

IS YOUR CHILD PREPARING TO TRAVEL INDEPENDENTLY IN THE COMMUNITY?

Neighbourhood Watch NT believes that everybody has the right to feel safe at all times.

NHW4Kids is an e-learning portal that aims to support caregivers in preparing their children to travel safely and independently in the community.

You will help your child to...

Improve their safety knowledge, increase their confidence and trust their instincts.

Recognise and react to their Early Warning Signs and identify and use a Personal Network.

Plan their route and identify potential safety hazards in a virtual neighbourhood.



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Child Safety Review

Have your say!

The safety, health and wellbeing of all children who attend education and care services is paramount.

Public consultation about regulatory and non-regulatory policy options to improve child safety in the education and care sector is open until **11 June 2025***.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE CHANGES?

There are six themes across the changes for consideration. For more information, read the Consultation Regulation Impact Statement, using the QR code below, or go to content.deloitte.com.au/ChildSafetyReview.



Management of digital devices



Child safety training



Responding to educator and staff member conduct



Working with Children Checks



Improving the safety of the physical service environment



Additional recommendations

Get involved



Information Webinar
Learn about the policy options

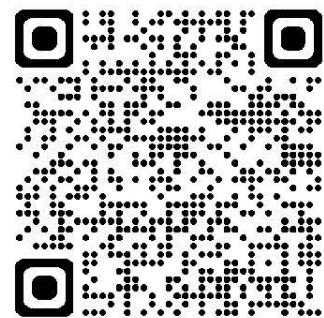


Surveys
Answer a family, educator, service or provider survey



Submissions
Make a brief comment or upload a document

For more information



content.deloitte.com.au/ChildSafetyReview

**Surveys and submissions open 5 May 2025*