

# COGSO

strong schools • strong communities

# parent

NT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOL ORGANISATIONS

Issue 1, 2017



COGSO is a community-based, not-for-profit organisation that provides advocacy and representation at the local school, NT and federal government levels.



## COGSO President's

## Message

Hello Everyone,  
I hope you and your children have had a wonderful start to the 2017 school year.

The NT Government's election commitment of \$20M every year for the next 4 years, hit school accounts in mid February and was welcomed by school communities all over the Northern Territory. You could almost hear the sigh of relief after the last four years of budget cuts.

COGSO continues to advocate for Federal 'Gonski' funding for our children. The Federal Government's desire to move away from a system where every child's needs are met, enabling every child to achieve to their potential, is a very short sighted, socially and economically irresponsible decision.

The loss of Gonski funding would see \$100 million taken away from our children in Territory Schools.

Schools in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania have benefitted significantly with Gonski funding. They have been able to provide amongst many other things, speech/occupational therapists, information technology upgrades, extension programs for gifted students, this list goes on.

Meeting a child's educational needs improves the child's outcomes at school.

Student results are improving in schools that have received Gonski funding, evidenced by greater levels of engagement and attendance, decrease in disciplinary actions and absences, core literacy and numeracy results improving, increases in ATAR scores and University offers.



### **Our children need Gonski in the Northern Territory!**

The Education Act was updated in December 2015, a School Council or an Independent Public School (IPS) Board is now referred to as the School Representative Body. The functions and powers of a School Council or an IPS Board, are exactly the same under Northern Territory Legislation.

School Representative Bodies are essentially the parents and carers of children attending public schools in the NT, as well as staff representatives, the Principal and any invited members.

COGSO is here to support school communities and School Representative Bodies, who are supporting your children.

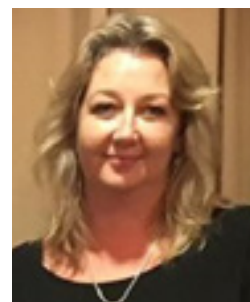
A core part of the COGSO function is to provide Governance and Finance Training to School Representative Bodies. All Annual General Meetings should have been held by now, so please, book your Governance, Finance or Industrial Relations training, if you have not already done so.

An informed Representative Body makes the best decisions for the children in their school. Governance training empowers the people in the Representative Body and will ensure the best outcomes for every child in the school.

[www.ntcogso.org.au/pages/School-Council-Resources.html](http://www.ntcogso.org.au/pages/School-Council-Resources.html)

Have a fun and safe Easter break with your family and friends.

**Tabby Fudge**  
President





### WHAT TO DO ABOUT CYBERBULLYING

- Keep a record of the bullying.
- Report cyberbullying online to the eSafety Commissioner or report the bullying on different social media websites.
- Try your hardest not to engage with the bullying. People who bully others are often looking for a response to know that they have affected you.
- Talk to someone you trust about what is going on to help you feel less alone about what's going on.

More tips on: [www.esafety.gov.au](http://www.esafety.gov.au)

### KIDSMATTER

KidsMatter provides families with a range of information sheets to help them support children's mental health and wellbeing, and to recognise if and when professional help is needed.

They contain practical information, tips and strategies across a range of common childhood issues, and were prepared by professional experienced in the area of children's mental health and development.

[www.kidsmatter.edu.au](http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au)

### LEARNING POTENTIAL

The Australian Government program, Learning Potential, helps parents to be more involved in their child's learning, from the highchair to high school. The Learning Potential app has lots of useful tips and ideas to help you make the most of those small opportunities in your busy day.

[www.learningpotential.gov.au](http://www.learningpotential.gov.au)

## \$20 MILLION FUNDING BOOST TO BENEFIT SCHOOLS



Education Minister Eva Lawler has announced the Territory Labor Government has delivered on a key election promise with the first tranche of its four-year \$124 million investment in education going into 151 government schools across the Territory.

"We know how important it is that every child gets the best possible start in life which is supported by a quality education. That is why investing in our children is not only the right thing to do, but the smart thing to do for the Territory's future," Ms Lawler said.

"Schools will choose how to allocate this additional money to best meet the needs of their students.

"This might be in the form of extra teachers, support staff or additional school resources to deliver high-quality teaching and learning programs. All government schools will benefit from the additional funding.

"We have listened to community concerns and taken action to provide schools with the funding they need," Ms Lawler said.

The \$124 million package includes an additional \$20 million a year which will go directly into school budgets, as well as other targeted funding initiatives.

**COGSO was proud to fight for our schools and secure this commitment during the 2016 election.**

Photo credit: NT News

# WE HAVE BEEN BUSY

Get to know a little more about what COGSO did this Term 1 2017

We are committed to helping schools and communities across the Territory

We assisted

25

schools with their AGM's



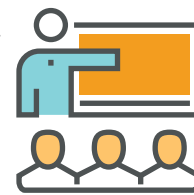
We have travelled far and wide across the Territory



We have made submissions to the... Federal Inquiry into the Hearing Health and Wellbeing of Australia



and the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the NT



We have trained over

150

participants from 20 schools



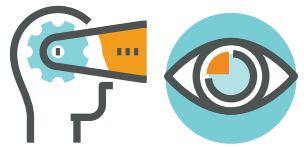


Commonly called shortsightedness, a condition in which light is focussed in front of the retina.

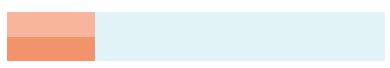
# MYOPIA

## WHAT IS MYOPIA?

Myopia, commonly called shortsightedness, is a condition in which light is focussed in front of the retina, resulting in blurred vision. Shortsighted people can often see reasonably clearly at short distances, but will not be able to see distant objects clearly. There is currently no cure for myopia, but spectacles, contact lenses and refractive surgery can all provide good distance vision for people with myopia.



Approximately  
**1 IN 5**



Australian Children suffer from an undetected vision problem.

## WHAT CAUSES MYOPIA?

The exact causes of myopia are not known. At various times people have blamed excessive amounts of reading, poor metabolism, poor diet, poor light, poor posture and genetic factors. Recent research has shown that the development of myopia is influenced by both genetic and environmental factors.

## CAN MYOPIA BE CURED?

Despite ongoing research, a cure for myopia has not yet been found. Properly prescribed spectacles or contact lenses will enable a person with myopia to see clearly Your optometrist can advise you about the latest developments and whether they would be suitable for you.

Read more at [www.optometry.org.au/your-eyes/your-eye-health/eye-conditions/myopia.aspx](http://www.optometry.org.au/your-eyes/your-eye-health/eye-conditions/myopia.aspx)

## HOW CAN I TELL IF MY CHILD IS SHORTSIGHTED?

A complete eye test is the only sure way of determining whether your child's vision is normal. Some clues to myopia in a child are:

- screwing up eyes to see distant objects;
- difficulty reading the blackboard at school;
- poor posture while reading; and
- lack of interest in playing outdoor games.



## SMART EYE START

Approximately 1 in 5 Australian children suffer from an undetected vision problem. The Smart Eye Start initiative from Optometry Northern Territory and Queensland encourages all parents to take their children to have a full eye examination at an optometry practice prior to Prep or early on in schooling. Schools that sign up as Smart Eye Start schools will receive a digital media kit to help them promote the initiative. [www.optometryqldnt.org.au/ses-about](http://www.optometryqldnt.org.au/ses-about)





# NEW NT TEACHERS & PRINCIPALS ORIENTATION EVENT

## Department of Education

COGSO was thrilled to meet many new Principals and Teachers in January as we all welcomed 200 new staff to NT school positions.

Lots of interest in NT school governance.

Lots and lots of interest in Mindfulness in Education. We were particularly impressed with new graduates who use the Smiling Mind application for themselves and during their pracs with students! (With a few crocodile questions thrown our way too!)

A room full of motivated and

passionate educators eagerly looking forward to meeting our students.

Thank you Department of Education for inviting COGSO to be a part of NT Principals & Teachers Induction day.



SMILING MIND

MINDFULNESS IN EDUCATION

"I thought the Smiling Mind program was really beneficial for me because it calmed me down and helped me to concentrate" - Student, Year 7.

## WHAT IS SMILING MIND?

Smiling Mind is a unique web and app-based program developed by psychologists and educators to help build mental health and well-being, using positive and innovative tools that are accessible to all.

[smilingmind.com.au](http://smilingmind.com.au)



ISOLATED CHILDREN'S

PARENTS ASSOCIATION

ICPA has been operating throughout Australia and in the NT for over forty years. ICPA's primary objective is to ensure equity of access to education for all students from early childhood to tertiary.

ICPA represents students who are educated by distance education, small rural schools, boarding schools, school term hostels and early childhood services. Tertiary students are regarded as those who seek further education, whether it is an apprenticeship, traineeship, university degree or TAFE course.

In the Northern Territory ICPA has a State Council and three branches, Alice Springs, Katherine and Lone Members who lobby Government and

other bodies for the educational betterment of its members and all children living in rural and remote areas.

ICPA members' children are able to apply for grants, bursaries and competitions and access to the Home Tutor Register which assists families who are looking for a home tutor or carer for children. Anyone who is interested is welcome to join ICPA with yearly membership only being \$50.

For more information or if you are interested in becoming a member see our website

[www.nt.icpa.com.au](http://www.nt.icpa.com.au) or email [NTPresident@icpa.com.au](mailto:NTPresident@icpa.com.au) or [NTSecretary@icpa.com.au](mailto:NTSecretary@icpa.com.au)

# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



The research shows a very strong link to attending school and being engaged in learning everyday to the progress and achievement each young person makes.

In 2017, we are striving to continue the positive momentum of 2016 where we celebrated 1399 Northern Territory Year 12 students in receiving their Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET), to date the highest number of NT students to achieve this in a year. In February 2017, we commended the achievements of the 2016 Year 12 students at the Northern Territory Board of Studies Awards held in Alice Springs and Darwin.

These students are our high achievers and we applaud their hard work and dedication, whilst at the same time acknowledging that the way success is measured varies from student to student.

The success and achievements of all students start with you as a family. Your support and guidance provided at home is essential for children to succeed in whichever educational pathway they choose. I encourage all families to be active participants in their child's education, this may be reading a book together or discussing an important part of history such as the Bombing of Darwin at the dinner table. These incidental interactions will assist in building your child's willingness and capacity to learn.

It is important that families support their children to get to school every day and that students are organised and ready to learn. The research shows a very strong link to attending school and being engaged in learning every day to the progress and achievement each young person makes.

It is equally as important for families to provide and seek regular and ongoing feedback from their children in relation to their learning.

Asking questions such as: What are you learning? What are you enjoying at school? What are you finding challenging? What support do you need to overcome these challenges? will assist in opening up the dialogue. It will also assist in identifying areas that may need to be discussed with teachers and the school.

On a slightly different note, I wanted to let you know that all schools will benefit from the \$20 million in additional funding that was allocated into global school budgets in February 2017. You may have already seen the Minister for Education's announcement about this.

The additional \$20 million has been allocated to areas that have been identified through feedback from school principals and analysis of school budgets.

The identified areas are:

- senior years' students;
- middle years' students;
- preschool and transition students;
- students enrolled in homeland learning centres;
- schools with a high concentration of Indigenous students in response to high student mobility and turnover; and
- students at special schools and distance education schools.

Schools are now working with their school councils/boards to choose how to spend the additional funds to best meet the needs of their students. This may be in the form of additional teaching staff, support staff or additional resources to deliver high quality teaching and learning programs to its students.

The allocation of the additional funding has also provided an increase of \$100 to the base funding for all students.

Combined with the support of families and the community, the additional funding will most definitely contribute to providing all young Territorians with high quality teachers and high quality programs.

Finally, my sincere thanks to COGSO for their work with school councils and boards as they conduct their Annual General Meetings and elect their members for 2017. Please consider if this is a way you might like to be involved in your child's school, as your contribution will be valued.



**Vicki Baylis**  
Chief Executive  
Department of  
Education





## COGSO MEETS WACSSO

At the beginning of 2017, NT COGSO met with our WA counterpart, Western Australian Council of State School Organisations (WACSSO) in Perth.

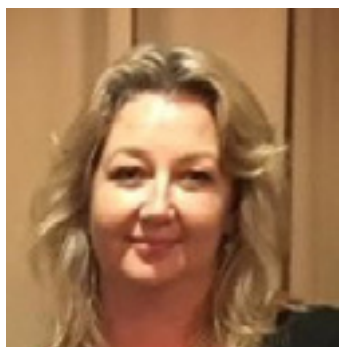
It was terrific to work with likeminded, passionate people who also see the importance of meeting the needs of indigenous students with hearing loss and working

to raise this national issue at a federal level.

We look forward to working with them in the future.

Pictured from left: WACSSO President Kylie Catto, Vice President Pania Turner, NTCOGSO Executive Officer Michelle Parker, NTCOGSO President Tabby Fudge and WACSSO Communications & Research Officer Alex O'Neil.

## MEET YOUR COGSO EXECUTIVE



**TABBY FUDGE**  
President



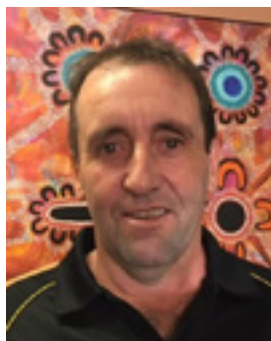
**ROBIN LAWRENCE**  
Vice President



**TOOBA AWAIS**  
Treasurer



**JEFF COOK**  
Arnhem Rep



**WAYNE GREEN**  
Barkly Rep



**NOELENE ARMSTRONG**  
Darwin Rep



**ALLAN KINGSLEY**  
Katherine Rep



**BEVERLEY RATAHI**  
Palmerston & Rural Rep



**JOHN ADAMS**  
Southern Rep

**One Voice for Territory Public Education**  
COGSO encourages continual improvement in the provision of quality educational outcomes for all students in public education.

Contact COGSO on 8999 3255 or email [enquiries@ntcogso.org.au](mailto:enquiries@ntcogso.org.au)