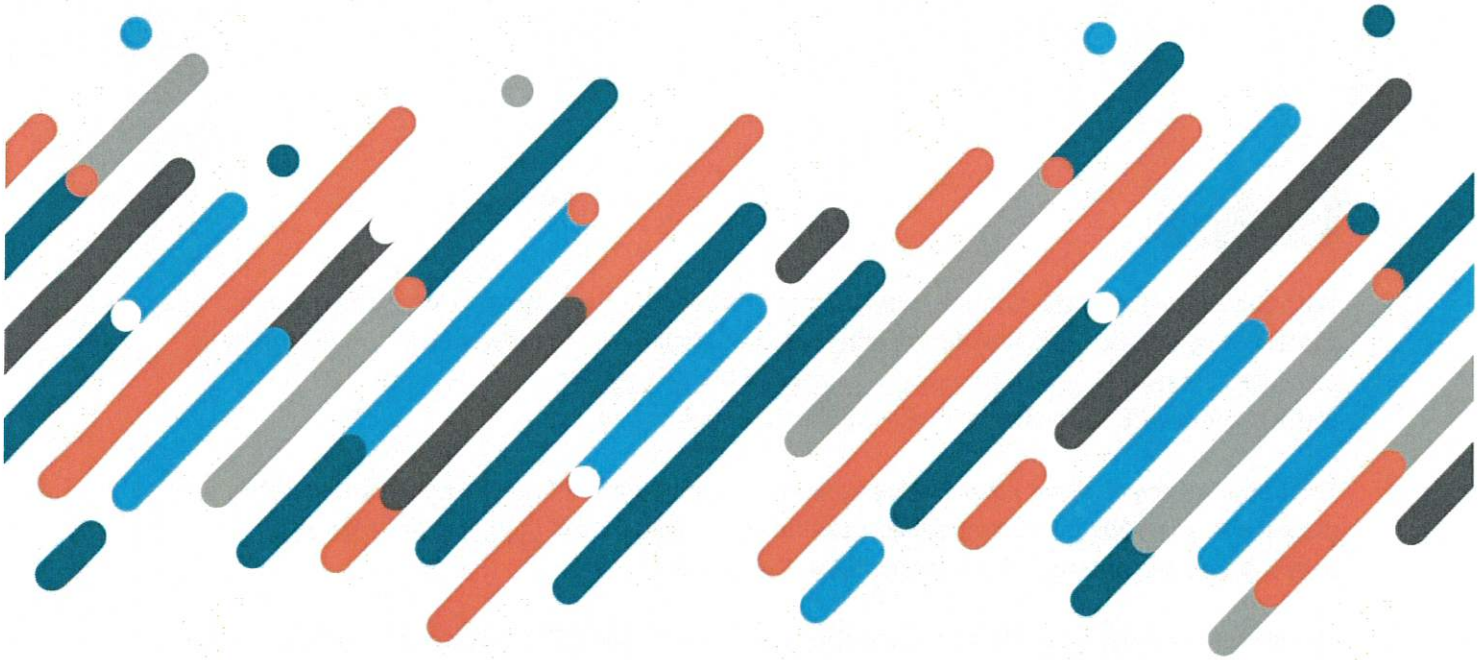
Australian Government
Department of Education

Choice and Affordability Fund Work Plan 2026-27

Association of Independent Schools of the ACT (AISACT)

Date agreed – November 2025



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The document must be attributed as the CAF Work Plan 2026-2027 Association of Independent Schools of the ACT (AISACT).

Summary of Work Plan 2026-27

During 2026 to 2027 AISACT will continue to address the five National Priorities (NP) of Choice and Affordability of schools, Transition Assistance, Special Circumstances Funding, Strengthening Outcomes for Schools and Educationally Disadvantaged Schools and Students, and Student Wellbeing and Support.

During 2026-2027 the activities proposed under the Choice and Affordability Fund continue to build on the previous workplan (2022-2025), supporting ACT Independent schools in addressing the national priorities. The Work Plan has been developed in consultation with the AISACT Executive Committee and communicated to all Member schools. Projects and activities include both distributed funds provided directly to schools and to deliver centralised programs designed to best support schools in key priority areas such as:

- leadership support with a focus on middle leaders and fostering increased resilience
- AI literacy support and upskilling
- a range of courses for supporting students with disability
- staff and student wellbeing and resilience
- early career teacher support
- school governance support
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural understanding – appreciation/awareness training
- support for students with disability
- support for student behaviour.

Under NP(a), Choice and Affordability of schools, grant funding will be offered to eligible schools in support of their work in facilitating parental choice of schools in the Independent sector in the ACT.

Transition Assistance (NP(b)) priority funds will be targeted to those schools that are negatively impacted by the shift to the Direct Measure of Income (DMI), as well as support for schools in general transitioning to the funding model.

Distributed funds will be available to schools through specific grant programs under the Strengthening Outcomes for Schools and Educationally Disadvantaged Schools and Students (NP(d)), and Student Wellbeing and Support (NP(e)) priorities.

Targeted Professional Learning opportunities will also be offered to support schools to address these priorities with a range of targeted programs over the two years available for leaders, teacher and board directors.

Special Circumstance Funding (NP(c)) will be available through direct grants for all schools who apply and meet the specific criteria to address unforeseen events and short-term emergency assistance.

Following extensive deliberation and consultation with the AISACT team, the AISACT Executive Committee and having an understanding of school needs and priorities, AISACT has determined the parameters by which the funding will be used and distributed to schools across the National Priorities.

Overarching Risk Management

Risk	Treatment: How the risk will be managed
Schools are increasingly finding it difficult to release staff for professional development and programs so there is a risk that some of our intended programs under the Choice and Affordability Fund will be undersubscribed.	AISACT is planning ahead and will be able to distribute the annual calendar of all events in advance so that schools can plan appropriately. In addition we are developing a new website which will include a members area. We will be able to upload many resources and webinars from our centralised programs so that school staff can access at a time that suits them (on-demand). Many of the programs we are developing are taking into account the intended group and their availability.
Schools not acquitting the funds for the purpose for which they are intended.	Schools will be required to provide an annual statement of intent for the use of funds. The Choice and Affordability agreement and National Priorities will be a standing item on AISACT General Meetings (all Member schools attend, four times per year).
Schools do not apply to access the available Special Circumstances fund.	AISACT will maintain regular correspondence with schools to inform them of the fund. Further, AISACT will make direct contact with schools should there be a circumstance in which the school may be eligible to apply.
Allocated funds are not accessed as need does not arise.	AISACT will re-direct funds over time to other Priorities as needed.

Budget for 2026–2027

Priority	Activities/Initiatives	2026		2027	
		Centralised $	Distributed $	Centralised $	Distributed $
A – Choice and Affordability	Facilitating Parental Choice See Schedule 1		151971		156530
B(1) – Transition Assistance	For eligible schools under the National Adjustment Assistance Fund See Schedule 1		81051		83483
B (2)– Transition Assistance	Financial and transition support for two eligible schools See Schedule 1		81051		83483
D – Strengthening outcomes for schools and educationally disadvantaged schools and students	This funding priority will be allocated through both centralised and distributed funds See Schedule 2	99298	60000	103179	60000
E – Student wellbeing and support	This funding priority will be allocated through both centralised and distributed funds See Schedule 2	120783	50000	119929	40000
Administrative costs		10131		10435	
Total		**$230212**	**$424073**	**$233543**	**$423496**

Activity/Initiative

Activity/Initiative	**Facilitating Parental Choice**
Priority	**A – Choice and Affordability**
Description	AISACT will continue the distribution of funds for 2026-2027 to every Member school that is eligible under this priority. This priority provides funding for initiatives that facilitate parental choice and opportunity, giving parents the ability to choose an affordable school for their child that aligns with their own values, education philosophy or faith and one that meets the needs of their child. The allocation each year to schools will be based on a school's enrolments and DMI. The allocation amount is based on a formula that was agreed by all Members. This funding will be used by each school for initiatives that facilitate measures which improve affordability for the parent community. Schools will receive correspondence outlining the predicted funding amount they could expect in the years 2026-2027. Schools will be required, on acceptance of the funds, to indicate how the allocated funds will contribute to the school's plans under this priority. Schools will be asked to provide a clear statement which articulates how this funding will contribute to affordability, and how they will promote the school as a choice for parents. Forward planning is assisted through the early identification of the proposed funding levels.
Eligible schools	All 18 eligible Member schools of AISACT are eligible to access CAF support (This excludes Communities @ Work Galilee School, a Special Assistance School and Marist College – receive CAF from Catholic Education).
Timeframes	Schools will be informed of their proposed funding allocation for 2026-2027 at the beginning of 2026. Schools will receive annual payments by the end of March in each year.

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
Increased affordability of participating schools through planned use of the funds. Increased awareness of the suitability of a school by potential families.	All participating schools (18 schools) annually demonstrate practical measures to promote affordability and parental choice. Schools will provide an annual statement of intent of use of the funds.

Key Stakeholders	
Eligible Member schools, their principals and business managers.	The office of AISACT will work directly with individual schools to ensure comprehensive understanding of the requirements of this National Priority, and schools' responses. Further, all Member schools of AISACT meet in General meetings four times a year. Choice and Affordability programs and progress will be a standing item. Letters to schools indicating the funding and their responsibilities under this Priority will be provided.

Activity/Initiative Priority	**Negative Growth Assistance** B (1)– Transition Assistance
Description	Financial and transition support will be provided to the one eligible school which meets the criteria for access to support through the National Adjustment Assistance Fund (NAAF); that is, schools which will experience reductions in per student funding.
Eligible schools	One AISACT Member school, Radford College is eligible under these criteria. This school will receive direct grants each year for 2026 and 2027.
Timeframes	Radford College will be informed of their proposed funding allocation for 2026-2027 at the beginning of 2026. The school will receive annual payments by the end of March in each year.

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
Assist eligible school in transitioning to the new funding model.	The school will report on how the funding contributed to their transition plan.

Key Stakeholders	
Radford College is the only stakeholder eligible for this Priority.	AISACT will maintain regular contact with the school specific to the outcomes of this Priority.

Activity/Initiative Priority	**Transition Assistance** B (2) – Transition Assistance
Description	Financial and transition support will be provided to those schools which would meet the criteria determined by the AISACT Executive Committee. The AISACT Executive Committee determined that schools with an annual indexation rate below two per cent would be eligible to receive a direct grant under this Priority.
Eligible schools	Two Member schools are eligible for funding under the criteria determined by the Executive Committee: Burgmann Anglican School and Daramalan College.
Timeframes	These 2 schools will be informed of their proposed funding allocation for 2026-2027 at the beginning of 2026. The school will receive annual payments by the end of March in each year.

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
Assist eligible school in transitioning to the new funding model.	The schools will report on how the funding contributed to their transition plan.

Key Stakeholders	
Principals and Business Managers of Burgmann Anglican School and Daramalan College are the stakeholders eligible for this Priority.	AISACT will maintain regular contact with the school specific to the outcomes of this Priority.

Activity/Initiative Priority	**Special Circumstances Funding** C – Special Circumstances Funding
Description	The Choice and Affordability Fund is available for schools to apply for assistance if they are impacted by a special circumstance, as outlined in the CAF Guidelines, for short term assistance. The nature of support to a school experiencing special circumstances will vary by the type of circumstance. As a contingency, $50,000 in funding will be made available to provide assistance if required.
Eligible schools	All Member schools eligible to be supported through the Choice and Affordability Fund are able to apply to access this fund.
Timeframes	Schools are informed annually of the availability of this fund. Timeframes are determined by the circumstance, and when it occurs.

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
Any school assisted will be able to address the impact of the identified issue.	Schools which access this funding are able to continue operating with minimised interruption.

Key Stakeholders	
Eligible Member schools (19) individual schools), their principals and business managers.	The office of AISACT will work directly with individual schools to ensure comprehensive understanding of the requirements of this National Priority, and schools' responses. Further, all Member schools of AISACT meet in General meetings four times a year. Choice and Affordability programs and progress will be a standing item.

Activity/Initiative Priority	**Strengthening outcomes for schools and educationally disadvantaged schools and students** D – Strengthening School Outcomes - Grants
Description	This grant will support initiatives that strengthen outcomes for schools. Member schools will be able to apply for grants of $12,000. There will be up to five grants available per year. These direct grants will support programs/projects/initiatives/resources specific to a school which supports the focus of this Priority. Over the time of this workplan, it is anticipated that 50% of all Member schools would benefit from these direct grants (with the other 50% receiving grants 2028-2029).
Eligible schools	All Member schools eligible to be supported through the Choice and Affordability Fund are able to apply to access this fund. Schools will be selected to apply over the four years so that each school receives one grant.
Timeframes	Selected schools will be invited to apply for a grant at the beginning of each year 2026 – 2027. The schools will receive grant payments by the end of March in each year.

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
Schools will deliver programs/projects/initiatives/resources bespoke to their needs and articulated in their application which support strengthening outcomes for students.	AISACT will provide five grants each year for 2026 and 2027 (and then through to 2029). The schools report on how this grant contributed to meeting their stated outcome. Schools will make presentations highlighting the key achievements of their initiative at the AISACT Annual Celebrating Teaching and Learning event.

Key Stakeholders	
Eligible Member schools (five schools selected each year 2026-2028 and four schools in 2029) their principals and business managers.	The office of AISACT will work directly with individual schools to ensure comprehensive understanding of the requirements of this National Priority, and schools' responses. Further, all Member schools of AISACT meet in General meetings four times a year. Choice and Affordability programs and progress will be a standing item.

Activity/Initiative Priority	**Strengthening outcomes for schools and educationally disadvantaged schools and students** D – Strengthening School Outcomes – Professional Learning
Description	AISACT will provide a range of central professional learning programs which will focus on the Australian Curriculum, quality teaching and learning, good governance, quality leadership, support for early career teachers: - leadership support with a focus on middle leaders - fostering increased resilience for school leaders - staff and student wellbeing and resilience - AI literacy support and upskilling - early career teacher support - school governance support In addition, specialist support from the AISACT team will be provided to Member schools on an as needs basis.
Eligible schools	Staff from all Member schools will be able to access the suite of programs offered through AISACT, including board directors to foster excellence in school governance.
Timeframes	The AISACT Calendar of Professional Learning will be advertised each year through multiple networks already established with Member schools and on the AISACT website which will include a new members area that will host on-demand professional development.

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
Teachers will develop deeper understanding of the contemporary skills and practices applicable to each focus area.	Staff from all Member schools participate in a range of programs that will support their needs and roles. Teachers will make presentations on their learnings and implementation at the AISACT Annual Celebrating Teaching and Learning event.
Early Career teachers will have improved confidence to deliver quality teaching to their students.	Improved retention rates of early career teachers.
Middle leaders will have increased understanding of their role and impact.	Middle leaders present their learning at the AISACT Annual Celebrating Teaching and Learning event.
School boards will have increased capacity and understanding of their role as directors.	Establishment of Board Chair Network and access to a range of materials and professional learning for boards.

Key Stakeholders	
Eligible Member schools, their boards, principals, leadership teams and teachers, and the AISACT Teaching and Learning Subcommittee.	The AISACT team will work directly with individual schools to ensure comprehensive understanding of the requirements of this National Priority, and schools' responses. Further, all Member schools of AISACT meet in General meetings four times a year. Choice and Affordability programs and progress will be a standing item. New website and members area will increase access and visibility of offerings.

Activity/Initiative Priority	**Student wellbeing and support** E – Supporting Students - Grants
Description	This grant will support initiatives that strengthen outcomes for schools. Member schools will be able to apply for grants of $10,000. There will be up to five grants available with 5 schools in 2026 and four schools in 2027. These direct grants will support programs/projects/initiatives/resources specific to a school which supports the focus of this Priority. Over the time of this workplan, it is anticipated that 50% of all Member schools would benefit from these direct grants (with the other 50% receiving grants 2028-2029).
Eligible schools	All Member schools eligible to be supported through the Choice and Affordability Fund are able to apply to access this fund. Schools will be selected to apply over the four years so that each school receives one grant.
Timeframes	Allocated Member schools will be invited to apply for a grant at the beginning of each year 2026 -2027. The schools will receive grant payments by the end of March in each year.

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
Schools will deliver programs/projects/initiatives/resources bespoke to their needs and articulated in their application which support student wellbeing and ensure safe, supportive and respectful learning environments.	AISACT provides five grants each year. The schools report on how this grant contributed to meeting the stated outcome. Schools will make presentations on their initiative at the AISACT Annual Celebrating Teaching and Learning event.

Key Stakeholders	
Eligible Member schools (19) their principals and business managers.	The AISACT team will work directly with individual schools to ensure comprehensive understanding of the requirements of this National Priority, and schools' responses. Further, all Member schools of AISACT meet in General meetings four times a year. Choice and Affordability programs and progress will be a standing item. New website and members area will increase access and visibility of offerings.

Activity/Initiative Priority	**Student wellbeing and support** E – Supporting Students – Professional Learning
Description	AISACT will provide a range of central professional learning programs which will focus on proactive efforts to provide support for inclusive education and student and staff wellbeing though evidence informed practice with the aim to improve student outcomes and foster inclusive schools: - a range of courses for supporting students with disability - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural understanding – appreciation/awareness training - support for students with disability - support for student behaviour. In addition, specialist support and consultancy from the office of AISACT will be provided to Member schools on an as needs basis. This suite of programs will introduce proactive strategies for schools to promote safe, supportive and respectful learning environments. Mental health, student wellbeing and inclusive education will continue to be focus areas with AI literacy being a new focus for 2026.
Eligible schools	Staff from all Member schools will be able to access the suite of programs offered through AISACT.
Timeframes	The AISACT Calendar of Professional Learning will be advertised each year through multiple networks already established with Member schools and on the AISACT website which will include a new members area that will host on-demand professional development.

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
School leaders and teachers will develop deeper understanding of the contemporary skills and practices applicable to each focus area.	Staff from Member schools participate in the suite of programs. Teachers will make presentations on their learnings and implementation at the AISACT Annual Celebrating Teaching and Learning event.

Key Stakeholders	
Eligible Member schools, their principals and teachers, and the AISACT Teaching and Learning Subcommittee and the Education Support Subcommittee.	The office of AISACT will work directly with individual schools to ensure comprehensive understanding of the requirements of this National Priority, and schools' responses. Further, all Member schools of AISACT meet in General meetings four times a year.

	Choice and Affordability programs and progress will be a standing item. New website and members area will increase access and visibility of offerings.

Schedule 1 – Indicative school-level distributions 2026 - 2027

Priority A – Choice and Affordability

AGEID	School Name	2026	2027
17215	Blue Gum Community School	1852	1907
2910	Brindabella Christian College	11596	11944
16044	Burgmann Anglican School	18342	18892
2062	Canberra Christian School	2715	2797
2031	Canberra Girls Grammar School	11687	12038
2060	Canberra Grammar School	18984	19554
13363	Canberra Montessori School	1005	1035
*	Connections High School	827	851
13364	Covenant Christian School	3815	3930
2064	Daramalan College	15866	16342
15951	Emmaus Christian School	6808	7012
22837	Islamic School of Canberra	5759	5931
2912	Orana Steiner School	4705	4846
2914	Radford College	20129	20733
2068	St Edmund's College	10034	10335
*	Stromlo Forest Anglican College	561	578
30239	Taqwa School	5552	5719
2911	Trinity Christian School	11734	12086
	TOTAL	**151971**	**156530**

*New schools opening in 2026

Priority B – Transition Assistance

AGEID	School Name	2026	2027
2914	Radford College	81051	83483
16044	Burgmann Anglican School	43459	44763
2064	Daramalan College	37592	38720

Priority C – Special Circumstances Funding

AGEID	School Name	2026	2027
	Available if needed $50000 contingency		

Priority D – Strengthening outcomes for schools and educationally disadvantaged schools and students

AGEID	School Name	2026	2027
	Total to five schools (yet to be determined)	60000	60000

Priority E – Student wellbeing and support

AGEID	School Name	2026	2027
	Total to five schools (yet to be determined)	50,000	*40,000

*5 schools in 2026 and 4 schools in 2027

Schedule 2

Breakdown of anticipated programs for Priority D and E Centralised Budget

The following initiatives/programs are the top priorities for the 2026-2027 CAF Work Plan.

Priority D Strengthening School Outcomes for schools and educationally disadvantaged schools and students	**Overview**	**Costing 2026**	**Costing 2027**
AITSL Middle Leaders Partnership Leadership Development	Middle Leadership program to support schools with AITSL Standards and provide coaching to middle leaders. AISACT staff will support schools with current initiatives, plans and staff. This program will be rolled out flexibly to suit timeframes and contexts for each school context.	AITSL – no cost **External cost for professional coach: $5280** **AISACT staff allocation**	
Tim Perkins	Resilience training for school leaders Furthering program and follow up support from AISACT staff allocation.		**$6,000**
AI Year Long Program	AI literacy for leaders, teachers and students. Follow up support provided with AISACT staff allocation.	One x F2F Workshop - 3 strands x 3 workshops each 1. Policy 2. Teaching and Learning 3. Upskills teachers with skills and understanding **Total cost: $15,500**	
Amplify Program	Program for Early Career Teachers 2 full days – one day in Term 1, one day in Term 2 and followed up by 2 online sessions for both primary and secondary in Terms 3 and 4. In schools AISACT staff support to check in with early career teachers. AISACT staff allocation.	**$12,000** Includes flights and accommodation.	**$13,000** Includes flights and accommodation.

AICD Governance workshops - Governance development for excellence in school governance	2026 – AISACT staff allocation for Governance workshops for new board members and workshops on the relationships between board chair and principal to promote strong school governance. AISACT staff allocation for board support each year.		**AICD courses** **$15,000**
AISACT Staff allocation Priority D		**$66518**	**$69179**
TOTAL D		**$99298**	**$103179**
Priority E Student Wellbeing and Support	**Overview**	**Approximate Costing per annum**	
Building Wellbeing Workshop – Isabel Fox	Focus on mental health wellbeing and resilience as an alternative to the Mental Health First Aid course	25 x $225 **Total cost: $5625 plus catering**	25 x $230 **$5750 plus catering**
OLT Courses Partnership Agreement (for SWD)	Accredited tutor led and short courses. AISACT staff allocation to incorporate train the trainer model and support schools.	**$40,000 per year**	**$40,000 per year**
Cultural Appreciation Workshop	Nites Cultural Awareness | Nites Cultural Awareness Clinton Scott-knight | Canberra A range of offerings that we could consider to run some cultural appreciation/awareness training for all staff in schools.	$2800 plus flights and accommodation **Total: $4000**	
AISACT Staff allocation Priority E		**$66518**	**$69179**
Catering for program workshops, network		**$5000**	**$5000**

meetings for and /Incidental expenses			
TOTAL E		**$120783**	**$119929**
Approx total for 2026 and 2027	**Total D & E Centralised budget**	**$220081**	**$223108**

2026-27 CAF Workplan NGRB Sign Off

This 2026-27 CAF Workplan is submitted in fulfillment of the workplan requirement in part 4 of the CAF Agreement and I understand that, once approved, the work plan forms Attachment A to the CAF Agreement.

Name and Position of the person signing off on behalf of the NGRB: Tracey Taylor
Executive Director

Date: 28 October 2025