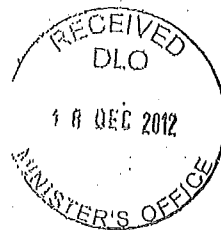




**ACT**  
Government  
Education and Training



**BRIEF**

**SUBJECT: SCHOOL SWIMMING POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

To: Minister for Education and Training

From: Executive Director, Learning, Teaching and Student Engagement

Director: Leanne Wright  
Branch: Learning and Teaching

**Recommendation**

That you note the proposed process for finalising the policy before the commencement of the 2013 school year.

Joy Burch MLA

*[Handwritten signature]* 18/12/12  
NOTED/PLEASE DISCUSS

*of appropriate response to community interest*

Action Officer: Stephen Gnieł  
Division: Learning, Teaching and Student Engagement  
Extension: 59172

**Critical date and reason**

31 January 2013. This will allow schools time to structure swimming carnivals around the new policy.

**Purpose**

That you note the proposed process for revising the current interim policy and consultation process.

**Background**

The *Interim Draft Swimming Carnival Procedures and Checklists* issued in September this year has raised issues for swimming pool operators, parents and teachers, especially in relation to proficiency testing of students and non-proficient swimmers being able to participate in water activities. Some schools cancelled end of year unstructured water activities due to the new policy.

The issue has received media attention and your office has received letters from members of the community.

As part of the current consultation process, the Directorate sent the *Interim Draft Swimming Carnival Policy and Checklist* to the following organisations external to this Directorate:

Royal Life Saving Society  
ACT Swimming Pool Manager  
Safe Water ACT  
Sport and Recreation Services  
Australian Education Union  
Council of P&C Associations  
Kids Safe  
School Sport ACT  
ACT Swimming

The consultation period for the draft policy was due to conclude in the second week of February.

You have requested the Directorate to complete the policy by the end of January and to consolidate swimming carnivals and unstructured swimming activities, such as end of year "fun" days into one policy and to ensure the policy maximises opportunities for all students to participate in water activities.

This brief provides a time frame and consultation process to ensure the policy and guidelines are in place for the start of the school year.

## Issues

### *Considerations in the revision of the Interim draft policy*

- the objectives are to ensure there is a clear process (when and how and by whom) to identify with certainty those students who are proficient and non-proficient swimmers, i.e. testing and identifying with wrist bands
- the level of supervision that needs to be in place for competitive events in carnivals and the free/unstructured swimming that takes place at both carnivals and fun events.
- clear and unambiguous definition of unstructured/free swimming

### *Consultation*

The Directorate is identifying key people with expertise to assist and we are proposing to meet with them in the week beginning 17 December. Key people are:

Sean Hodges	Royal Life Saving Society ACT
Representatives from a primary, high school and college	
Chris Graham	Dickson Pool
Mark Cartwright	ACTSport/ACT Swimming
Sue Knight	School Sport ACT

The feedback already received from parents and schools will form part of the consultation.

The Directorate will contact all organisations who received a copy of the *Draft Interim Swimming Carnival Policy and Checklist* to advise them of the shortened consultation time and to offer support and assistance in completing any submissions or in providing comment.

The Directorate will provide your office with an update of progress each week.

#### *Time frame*

The proposed timeframe is as follows:

Time	Item	Action
Week beginning 17 December	Meeting with key people	Confirm key issues to be addressed and possible solutions Brief Minister on progress
Week beginning 7 January	Commence revising policy	Key people to provide further feedback via email/phone. Brief Minister on progress
Week beginning 14 January	Meeting with key people	Consider draft revision. Brief Minister on progress
Week beginning 21 January	Finalise draft.	To Senior Executive Team and CORPEX for endorsement Brief Minister on progress
Week beginning 28 January	Release policy	Brief Minister Media release Disseminate to schools Identify key contacts within Directorate for schools needing advice (telephone hotline)

#### **Consultation**

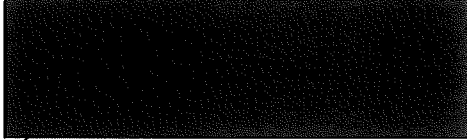
The proposed consultation process is outlined above. Stephen Ghieil has also met with Mr Sean Hodges from the Royal Life Saving Society.

#### **Financial**

Nil

**Media**

There has been considerable media interest in this issue. The finalisation of the policy will provide an opportunity for positive media coverage.



Stephen Gniel  
Executive Director  
Learning, Teaching and Student Engagement

( ) December 2012

**King, Ashley**

---

**From:** BURCH  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 19 December 2012 3:11 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Signed response from Minister Joy Burch  
**Attachments:** [REDACTED] Response.pdf

Good afternoon [REDACTED]

Please find attached signed response from Minister Joy Burch.

Kind regards

[REDACTED] Office Manager  
Office of Minister Joy Burch MLA

(Member for Brindabella)

ACT Minister for Education and Training | ACT Minister for Disability Services | ACT Minister for Children and Young People | ACT  
Minister for Multicultural Affairs | ACT Minister for Women | ACT Minister for Gaming and Racing | ACT Minister for Arts

P: (02) 620 50020 | F: (02) 620 53165

E: [REDACTED]

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**Joy Burch MLA**

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
MINISTER FOR DISABILITY, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
MINISTER FOR THE ARTS  
MINISTER FOR WOMEN  
MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS  
MINISTER FOR GAMING AND RACING

**E-MAILED**  
19-12-12

---

MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter of 30 November 2012 about the Education and Training Directorate's interim draft *Swimming Carnival Procedures and Checklist*.

I have appreciated the interest of and helpful suggestions received from the Canberra community. I am confident that the final policy will ensure the safety of our students and the continuation of swimming activities that are fundamental to the Australian way of life.

The Education and Training Directorate will consider all suggestions and feedback in developing the final policy. I have asked the Directorate to respond to community members who have taken the time to participate in the consultation period as soon as the consultation period is completed and the final policy in place.

If you would like to provide additional comment and feedback, the contact person is Mr Stephen Gniel, Executive Director, Learning, Teaching and Student Engagement, Education and Training Directorate. Mr Gniel's email is [Stephen.gniel@act.gov.au](mailto:Stephen.gniel@act.gov.au), telephone 6205 9172.

Thank you again for your valuable contribution.

Yours sincerely

Joy Burch MLA  
Minister for Education and Training  
18 December 2012

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601 GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** Friday, 30 November 2012 12:24 PM  
**To:** BURCH  
**Subject:** Compulsory School Swim Tests - Canberra Times P1 30 November 2012

Dear Minister Burch,

I am writing to express my dismay at an aspect of the announced swim test policy as reported in today's Canberra Times. It is advised (inter alia) that "students who could complete these steps would be given a blue tag while those who couldn't would wear yellow tags".

[Redacted]

It remains to be seen what specific community organisations might think of the idea.

Might we review this aspect of the policy? [Redacted]

Yours sincerely

[Redacted]

**To**

- Minister
- Chief of Staff
- Senior Advisor
- Media Advisor
- DLO
- OM

**Please**

- Reply
- Advise
- Noted
- File
- Comment .....
- Arrange Meeting
- FYI
- Refer to .....
- Action



**King, Ashley**

---

**From:** BURCH  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 19 December 2012 2:25 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Signed response from Minister Joy Burch  
**Attachments:** [REDACTED] response.pdf

Good afternoon [REDACTED]

Please find attached signed response from Minister Joy Burch.

Kind regards

[REDACTED] Office Manager  
Office of Minister Joy Burch MLA  
Member for Brindabella  
ACT Minister for Education and Training | ACT Minister for Disability Services | ACT Minister for Children and Young People | ACT  
Minister for Multicultural Affairs | ACT Minister for Women | ACT Minister for Gaming and Racing | ACT Minister for Arts  
P: (02) 620 50020 | F: (02) 620 53165  
[REDACTED]

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**Joy Burch MLA**

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
MINISTER FOR DISABILITY, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
MINISTER FOR THE ARTS  
MINISTER FOR WOMEN  
MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS  
MINISTER FOR GAMING AND RACING

**E-MAILED**  
19.12.12

---

MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter of 30 November 2012 and email of 13 December 2012 about the Education and Training Directorate's interim draft *Swimming Carnival Procedures and Checklist*.

I have appreciated the interest of and helpful suggestions received from the Canberra community. I am confident the final policy will ensure maximum participation by students while ensuring their safety.

I share your concern about children and young people being unable to swim. Swimming is a life skill for all Australians. The Government provides funding to schools to enable them to offer swimming programs. For example, in 2012-2013, at least 46 ACT Public primary schools are conducting swimming lessons and 34 of these have received funding assistance. The Government provided \$139,497 in direct funding to ACT public schools for swimming programs and the Royal Life Saving Society received an additional \$60,000 to support swimming programs. It is our hope that parents are able to follow up these formal lessons with visits to the pool where the children can improve their skills.

The Education and Training Directorate will consider all suggestions and feedback in developing the final policy. I have asked the Directorate to respond to community members who have taken the time to participate in the consultation period as soon as the consultation period is completed and the final policy in place.

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601 GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601

Phone (02) 6205 0020 Fax (02) 6205 0495 Email [BURCH@act.gov.au](mailto:BURCH@act.gov.au) Twitter: @JoyBurchMLA Facebook: [www.facebook.com/joyburchmla](http://www.facebook.com/joyburchmla) Page 2

If you would like to provide additional comment and feedback, the contact person is Mr Stephen Gniel, Executive Director, Learning, Teaching and Student Engagement, Education and Training Directorate. Mr Gniel's email is [Stephen.gniel@act.gov.au](mailto:Stephen.gniel@act.gov.au), telephone 6205 9172.

Thank you again for your valuable contribution to this important issue.

Yours sincerely



Joy Burch MLA  
Minister for Education and Training  
December 2012



[REDACTED]

30 November 2012

Ms Joy Burch MLA  
Minister for Education and Training  
GPO Box 1020  
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Ms Burch

I am writing to express my deep concern and utter disbelief at an announcement made at our primary school's P&C meeting recently. This news was confirmed by an article in today's Canberra Times, "Tough new rules force schools to cancel swim days".<sup>1</sup> Due to changes introduced by the ACT Government to The Swimming Proficiency Test, our primary school is extremely unlikely to hold a school based swimming carnival next year. If one is held, it will be a watered down version consisting solely of race events offered only to older students who are competent, competitive swimmers. Sorry, no fun to be had here. The reason for the change is because of [REDACTED] at the [REDACTED] swimming carnival. Whilst this must have been extremely frightening for all involved, how many thousands of children have swum, participated and enjoyed school swimming carnivals without incident? The response to this terrible experience seems to be an overreaction to keep all children away from water for fear of a repeat incident.

[REDACTED]

**I ask you - What are you doing to ensure that all children learn the basic life skills of water safety? What are you doing to ensure that all children in the ACT are able to pass the Swimming Proficiency Test?**

Under the new structure, you are limiting a school swimming carnival to proficient swimmers, that is, only children who already swim "outside school". You are saying it is not enough for you to participate. You have to know that you will be a competent, competitive swimmer. Otherwise, do not bother.

**How are you encouraging children to "have a go", participate and be active?**

Often, you hear parents talking about their parent-teacher interview feedback stating that their child does not take enough risks. The child needs to be braver, extend themselves, move out of their comfort zone. We, as adults, are displaying to children that it's not okay to take risks even well managed ones and try something new. Something may happen.

**How are you encouraging children to take a well-managed risk in an extremely safe environment with lifeguards and teachers supervising them enjoying a very Australian activity?**

You, yourself Ms Burch are quoted as saying "School fun days at the pool are part of being Australian".

How do you anticipate that a school with more than 450 students can test each and every student then run a swimming carnival in the same day? Do you expect schools to repeat the test every year for each and every student even for students who have times on the Swimming Australia National Results database? Honestly, has this proposal been thought through?

A swimming carnival is about so much more than a few competitive kids having a race. You have not factored in the benefits offered:

- Team spirit.
- Fun in the water.
- The willingness to "have a go".
- The courage children gain by seeing their friends and peers enjoying the water.
- The admiration of classmates for children who's strength lies in the sporting arena, in this instance, a swimming pool.
- Encouraging competitiveness and that burning desire to race fast.
- The setting of personal goals.
- The smile on kids faces who achieve regardless of place.
- The pride in getting a ribbon.
- The social interaction between children of all ages.
- The exposure of young children to a sport and extremely important life skill that their families may have not introduced them to.
- The leadership skills developed by senior students helping younger students.
- The fun and friendships formed outside the classroom environment especially for new children to the school as the carnivals are typically held early in the school year.
- The informal interaction between parents, staff and students.
- The thrill of an excursion with a bus ride.
- The unique event in which the entire school participates at a venue away from school.
- The opportunity for parents to be a part of the event taking on timekeeping roles, providing supper, etc.
- The building of school community relationships with parents, grandparents, relatives, friends and younger siblings joining in a fun day out.
- The business generated for local swimming pool operators. Our school estimates that instead of 450 students attending the event next year, there will be as little as 60 students.

[REDACTED]

It is about having a go, being part of a team, participating and having fun.

**How will children who have never been to a swimming carnival know what it is all about?** Our previous carnivals are a lovely mix of junior students having water play, fun in the sun; non-competitive activities on the shaded grass area or in a very shallow "baby" pool whilst senior students compete in races. They are exposed to "what is to come" when they get to senior school with a very gentle introduction. After the races, the junior students return to school and the senior kids have some free play in the water. A well deserved treat for children after racing, cheering on your team mates and willing your house to win.

[REDACTED]

What future are you offering? We will have a generation of adult non-swimmers, people who will be frightened of the water because they "might drown". [REDACTED]

I urge you to reconsider what you are taking away from thousands of children [REDACTED]

look forward to hearing from you.

Regards

[REDACTED]

CC: Diane Joseph, Director of ACT Education and Training Directorate  
Mark Sterland, Executive Officer, School Sport ACT  
Andrew Barr, ACT Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation  
Katy Gallagher, ACT Chief Minister  
Peter Garrett, Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth  
Kate Lundy, Minister for Sport

[REDACTED]

<sup>1</sup> Reference to Canberra Times Article, Tough new rules force schools to cancel swim days, 2012, 30 Nov. 12; <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/tough-new-rules-force-schools-to-cancel-swim-days-20121129-2ahwe.html>

**King, Ashley**

---

**From:** BURCH  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 19 December 2012 2:28 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Signed response from Minister Joy Burch  
**Attachments:** [REDACTED] Response.pdf

Good afternoon [REDACTED]

Please find attached signed response from Minister Joy Burch.

Kind regards

[REDACTED] Office Manager  
Office of Minister Joy Burch MLA  
Member for Brindabella  
ACT Minister for Education and Training | ACT Minister for Disability Services | ACT Minister for Children and Young People | ACT  
Minister for Multicultural Affairs | ACT Minister for Women | ACT Minister for Gaming and Racing | ACT Minister for Arts  
P: (02) 620 50020 | F: (02) 620 53165  
E: [REDACTED]

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**Joy Burch MLA**

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
MINISTER FOR DISABILITY, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
MINISTER FOR THE ARTS  
MINISTER FOR WOMEN  
MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS  
MINISTER FOR GAMING AND RACING

**E-MAILED**

19-12-12

MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter of 2 December 2012 about the Education and Training Directorate's interim draft *Swimming Carnival Procedures and Checklist*.

I have appreciated the interest of and helpful suggestions received from the Canberra community. I am confident the final policy will ensure maximum participation by students while ensuring their safety.

The advice I have received indicates that principals received copies of the interim draft policy in September. The policy documents include the policy itself, checklists that guide schools in the organisation of aquatic activities and DVDs that support the proficiency testing process. Since 2009, testing swimming proficiency has been a requirement for unstructured swimming activities and fun days.

I have also received advice that [REDACTED] School is conducting its swimming carnival in 2013.

The Education and Training Directorate will consider all suggestions and feedback in developing the final policy. I have asked the Directorate to respond to community members who have taken the time to participate in the consultation period as soon as the consultation period is completed and the final policy in place.

If you would like to provide additional comment and feedback, the contact person is Mr Stephen Gniel, Executive Director, Learning, Teaching and Student Engagement, Education and Training Directorate. Mr Gniel's email is [Stephen.gniel@act.gov.au](mailto:Stephen.gniel@act.gov.au), telephone 6205 9172.

Thank you again for your valuable contribution.

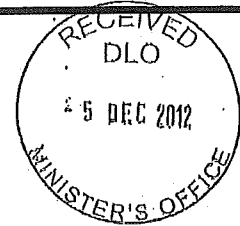
Yours sincerely

Joy Burch MLA  
Minister for Education and Training  
18 December 2012

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601 GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601

From: [Redacted]  
Sent: Sunday, 2 December 2012 8:29 PM  
To: BURCH  
Subject: "School Swimming Carnivals Procedures and Checklist" policy



Dear Ms Burch,

I am writing to you in connection with the new "School Swimming Carnivals Procedures and Checklist" policy.

I am a parent, [Redacted]

The first I knew of this policy was the announcement in the [Redacted] school news letter on 22<sup>nd</sup> November that

*"Pool Day - Cancelled*

*It is with regret that I have made the decision to cancel Pool Day. Recent changes to the Directorate's policy regarding the operation of events held at swimming pools have made the organisation of what I know has been a popular annual event very difficult. While it is possible to manage the risks, I am uncomfortable about asking staff to accept the level of responsibility this would require. Pool events are always stressful for teachers who are well aware that children drown silently. Many students have more confidence than ability.*

I am sure we can all agree that water safety is paramount and that every parent, school teacher, pool owner and operator has this foremost in their mind when allowing children access to a pool.

What is frustrating is that your Department has implemented at short notice a policy which increases the responsibility that school staff must accept to the point where Principals find it necessary to cancel pool days - at the end of final term when this activity is traditionally seen by many as the end of the school year and the start of summer holidays. Of more concern is that you have implemented a policy which apparently makes it safer for children, a commendable policy outcome, but at the expense of increasing risk to the teaching staff, how can this be?

I note there has been some press on this subject over the last few days and I have been trying to get access to the fully policy document, which as far as I can see, is not listed on the Department web site.

Absent this it is hard to form a firm view on the schools statement, but based on the press reports, it requires that every child undertakes a swim test and is tagged "BLUE" or "YELLOW". Given this and that fact that the start of term 1 is when school swim carnivals occur, which then lead on to interschool swim meets in March and interstate meets thereafter, can you assure me that schools will be given the additional resources necessary to implement your new policy in a timely manner without impact to the 2013 school sporting calendar?

With respect, an alternative approach would be to consider a staged implementation with appropriate engagement with stakeholders, but given time is against this I am keen to see that next year's activities will not be cancelled as has been the case this year.

Regards:

[Redacted signature]

- To
- Minister
- Chief of Staff
- Senior Advisor
- Media Advisor
- DLO
- OM

Please

- Reply
- Advise
- Noted
- File
- Comment .....
- Arrange Meeting
- FYI
- Refer to .....
- Action





**ACT**  
Government

Education and Training



Dear 

Thank you for your email of 19 December 2012, in response to the letter from the Minister, Ms Joy Burch.

As a very recent principal in two ACT schools (a primary school and a P-10 school), I understand fully the care and logistical planning that goes into any school excursion, especially those that can pose a higher than usual risk to students and staff. The decisions in planning for these events can vary from school to school. For example, some schools can rely on a high level of parent involvement and support. In other schools, the capacity of parents to assist is limited. The swimming proficiency of students also varies greatly from school to school. For example, one school with over 400 students has conducted swimming lessons every year but only a very small percentage of students are proficient. Again the capacity of parents to take their children to the pool to practise their swimming skills varies.

Although schools may be closed, work on the policy is continuing and schools will receive advice in time for them to organise their 2013 carnivals. I have had discussions with the President of the Council of P&C Associations to seek their comment and suggestions in relation to the policy. A group of stakeholders, comprising teachers, representatives from ACT School Sport, ACT Swimming, Swim Safe and ACT pool owners/managers has already met to identify and discuss the areas in the policy that are causing concern. This group will continue to meet and work on the policy throughout January. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Ms Leanne Wright, Director, Learning and Teaching on 6205 9205.

What is very clear is that everyone wants the same thing – students to be participating in and enjoying water activities in a safe environment. The task is to ensure that the policy provides clear and unambiguous advice to schools and that the processes enable students to participate in a safe and supported way.

Thank you for your comments.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Gniel  
Executive Director  
Learning, Teaching and Student Engagement

**Burkevics, Nancye**

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 19 December 2012 4:27 PM  
**To:** Gnllel, Stephen  
**Cc:** BURCH  
**Subject:** Fw: Signed response from Minister Joy Burch  
**Attachments:** [REDACTED]response.pdf; School Swimming Carnival Madness.pdf  
  
**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged  
  
**Categories:** Purple Category, Green Category

STEVE – HAVE TRIMMED

Dear Mr Gnllel,

I write to you with the hope of a more informed and insightful response than the one I received from Ms Burch's office today (attached document [REDACTED]response.pdf).

I have also attached a copy of the original letter I sent to Ms Burch highlighting the benefits a school swimming carnival brings to a school community (attached document School Swimming Carnival Madness.pdf). I hope you take into consideration these points when reviewing the interim draft *Swimming Carnival Procedures and Checklist*. I hope too that you realise that the checklist of swimming skills you are assessing students against seems extremely excessive particularly for junior school students who, at least at our school, participate in "fun water based play" in the "baby" pool or on the grass in the shaded area. Perhaps someone from the Department needs to actually attend an event rather than make decisions from an office desk? These are fun days for children.

I also refer to an article in The Canberra Times last week where Ms Burch said that the new policy would be reviewed with education officials, with the views of schools, parents and life-saving and swimming groups to be sought (see link below).

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/school-swimmers-may-get-reprieve-on-policy-20121211-2b878.html>

There are now only 2 school days left for 2012 and 6 school days prior to our school's 2013 "swimming carnival" for want of a better description. Our school carnival is scheduled for Tuesday of the second week of school next year. This means there is only just over 1 week of planning towards this much loved school based event which remains up in the air due to the "hardline school swimming safety policy".

Carnivals are held this early in the school year to ensure that there is adequate time to run zone and ACT carnivals prior to national swimming school competitions. It is extremely difficult to gain bookings at local pools. [REDACTED]

██████████ but sadly, at this stage, not too many children will be attending due to the policy.

There is an urgency to adopt some common sense to this debate. Please make this a priority.

Regards, ██████████

----- Original Message -----

From: BURCH

To: ██████████

Sent: Wednesday, December 19, 2012 2:25 PM

Subject: Signed response from Minister Joy Burch

Good afternoon ██████████

Please find attached signed response from Minister Joy Burch.

Kind regards

██████████ Office Manager

Office of Minister Joy Burch MLA

Member for Brindabella

ACT Minister for Education and Training | ACT Minister for Disability Services | ACT Minister for Children and Young People | ACT Minister for Multicultural Affairs | ACT Minister for Women | ACT Minister for Gaming and Racing | ACT Minister for Arts

P: (02) 620 50020 | F: (02) 620 53165

E: ██████████

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-----  
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-----

[REDACTED]

---


**From:** BURCH  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 9 January 2013 4:48 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Response from Minister Burch  
**Attachments:** [REDACTED] Response from Minister Burch.pdf

Good Afternoon

Please find attached a response from Minister for Education and Training, Joy Burch MLA.

Regards

[REDACTED] Acting Office Manager / Executive Assistant | Office of Joy Burch MLA  
ACT Minister for Education & Training | ACT Minister for the Arts | ACT Minister for Multicultural Affairs | ACT Minister for  
Disability, Children & Young People | ACT Minister for Women | ACT Minister for Gaming and Racing | Member for Brindabella  
P: (02) 620 50020 | F: (02) 620 53165  
E: [BURCH@act.gov.au](mailto:BURCH@act.gov.au)

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E-MAILED  
9/1/13

**Joy Burch MLA**

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
MINISTER FOR DISABILITY, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
MINISTER FOR THE ARTS  
MINISTER FOR WOMEN  
MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS  
MINISTER FOR GAMING AND RACING

---

MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter of 13 December 2012 about your [REDACTED] participation in his school swimming carnival in 2013. I have appreciated the interest of and helpful suggestions received from the Canberra community in relation to this important issue. I have also appreciated the support families are giving their children to improve their swimming proficiency, such as the encouragement and help you are giving [REDACTED]

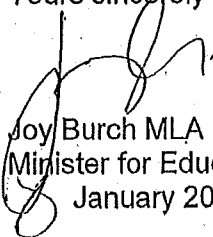
Work on the water activities policy has commenced and schools will receive advice in time for them to organise their 2013 carnivals. A group of stakeholders has already met to identify and discuss the areas in the policy that are causing concern. This group is continuing to meet and work on the policy throughout January. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Ms Leanne Wright, Director, Learning and Teaching on 6205 9205.

From the suggestions I have received, it is very clear everyone wants the same outcome – students to be participating in and enjoying water activities in a safe environment. I am confident the final policy will ensure the safety of our students and the continuation of swimming activities that are fundamental to the Australian way of life.

I was pleased to read about your [REDACTED] participation in the Weetbix Tryathlon. I am sure with [REDACTED] enthusiasm and your support [REDACTED] will continue to improve [REDACTED] swimming skills.

Thank you for bringing your views to my attention.

Yours sincerely

  
Joy Burch MLA  
Minister for Education and Training  
January 2013

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601 GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: Thursday, 13 December 2012 1:47 PM  
To: BURCH  
Subject: the stupid swimming policy

Ms Burch

Thank heavens you have agreed to review your ridiculous "hardline school safety swimming policy"! Hopefully you will review it quickly, as school breaks up in 6 days and my [REDACTED] school swimming carnival is scheduled for very early in term 1, 2013.

At the moment, and until these knee jerk reaction policies are reviewed and hopefully adjusted, [REDACTED] at their annual school swimming carnival! How ridiculous!

[REDACTED]

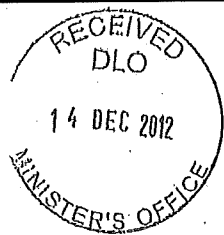
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and heaps of their school friends partake in the annual Weetbix Tryathlon and their school swimming carnival gets them all fired up and ready to compete; please don't spoil this by introducing such a backward policy; apart from anything else - who is going to stay back at school and supervise the kids who aren't deemed good enough to be on the bus to the pool?

Speed is of the essence and common sense must prevail.

Regards

[REDACTED]



- To
- Minister
  - Chief of Staff
  - Senior Advisor
  - Media Advisor
  - DLO
  - OM
- Please
- Reply
  - Advise
  - Noted
  - File
  - Comment .....
  - Arrange Meeting
  - FYI
  - Refer to .....
  - Action

[REDACTED]

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**From:** BURCH  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 9 January 2013 4:47 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Response from Minister Burch  
**Attachments:** [REDACTED] Response from Minister Burch.pdf

Good Afternoon

Please find attached a response from Minister for Education and Training, Joy Burch MLA.

Regards

[REDACTED] Acting Office Manager / Executive Assistant | Office of Joy Burch, MLA  
ACT Minister for Education & Training | ACT Minister for the Arts | ACT Minister for Multicultural Affairs | ACT Minister for  
Disability, Children & Young People | ACT Minister for Women | ACT Minister for Gaming and Racing | Member for Brindabella  
P: (02) 620 50020 | F: (02) 620 53165  
E: [BURCH@act.gov.au](mailto:BURCH@act.gov.au)

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**E-MAILED**  
9/1/13

**Joy Burch MLA**

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
MINISTER FOR DISABILITY, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
MINISTER FOR THE ARTS  
MINISTER FOR WOMEN  
MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS  
MINISTER FOR GAMING AND RACING

MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

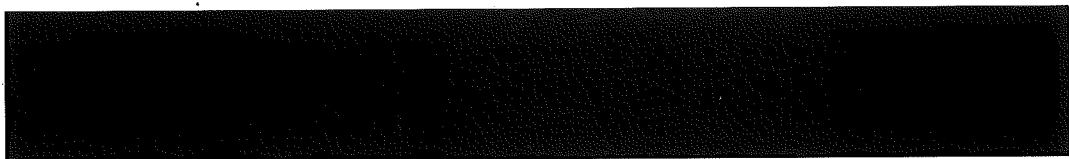


Dear [Redacted]

Thank you for your letter of 11 December 2012, about the swimming policy and [Redacted]

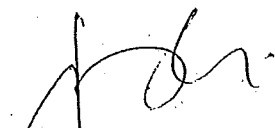
I have appreciated the interest of the community in the Education and Training Directorate's policy in relation to water activities. A group of stakeholders has already met to identify and discuss the areas in the policy that are causing concern. This group is continuing to meet and work on the policy throughout January and the Directorate will provide advice to schools in time for the organisation of the 2013 swimming carnivals. Comments received from the community are being taken into consideration but if you would like to discuss this further, please contact Ms Leanne Wright, Director, Learning and Teaching on 6205 9205.

I am confident the final policy will encourage participation while ensuring the safety of all students.



Thank you for your support of public education in the ACT.

Yours sincerely,

  
Joy Burch MLA  
Minister for Education and Training  
January 2013

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601 GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601

Phone (02) 6205 0020 Fax (02) 6205 0495 Email [BURCH@act.gov.au](mailto:BURCH@act.gov.au) Twitter: @JoyBurchMLA Facebook: [www.facebook.com/joyburchmla](http://www.facebook.com/joyburchmla)



From: [Redacted]  
Sent: Tuesday, 11 December 2012 8:07 AM  
To: BURCH  
Subject: Swimming at schools and [Redacted]

Dear Ms Burch

① I am writing about two issues relating to secondary school in the ACT. First I am concerned that the new rules regarding swimming is detrimental to encouraging physical activity in children and to encourage their competence in water. More and more regulation is not a solution.

② [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Thankyou [Redacted]

T

Sent from my iPad

To

- Minister
- Chief of Staff
- Senior Advisor
- Media Advisor
- DLO
- OM

Please

- Reply
- Advise
- Noted
- File
- Comment .....
- Arrange Meeting
- FYI
- Refer to .....
- Action

Hine, Martin

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 17 January 2013 1:16 PM  
**To:** Hine, Martin  
**Subject:** RE: Swimming Pool and Water Park Aquatic Activities Policy

Hi Martin

Having looked at the information and flow chart you sent through to me, I feel that the right decisions have been made in the best interests of the students, their involvement and participation in water activities and the staff involved.

In particular, the positives are

- \* The policy clearly defines the difference between structured and unstructured activities and the requirements for both
- \* Proficiency testing is not required for structured aquatic activities
- \* It is an excellent addition to include the unstructured activities below waist deep not requiring a proficiency test, as many junior primary students' play can occur in shallow water using the "baby pools" which would obviously not require swimming proficiency.
- \* It informs staff the need to use 5 star accredited venues and importantly also allows the flexibility to use venues that can comply by being audited against the 5 star guidelines

My questions are

1.  
Who can determine if a venue complies with the 5 star rating during the audit process if it is not already ranked by the RLSSA?

Can a staff member do this?

2.  
If a student is tested as proficient in year 5 does he need to be retested in Year 6 or if a Year 9 student tests proficient does he need to be retested in Year 10?

Do all students need to be tested every year? Can we "ear mark" certain students that should be tested each year but obviously strong swimmers can be marked as proficient for future years?

Addition comments for your consideration:

\* When looking at supervision, can older students (eg year 11 and 12) and parents be involved in the ratios for supervision, given they are under the indirect supervision of teaching staff who would be the ones who carry "Duty of Care"?

\* I would suggest that for older students to be counted in actual ratios they should have completed basic training in Risk Management and supervision in the aquatic environment.

Thanks again and I look forward to seeing the additional documents as they are completed.

Regards

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**From:** Hine, Martin [Martin.Hine@act.gov.au]  
**Sent:** Thursday 17 January 2013 12:22  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: Swimming Pool and Water Park Aquatic Activities Policy

Hi [REDACTED]

Thank you for agreeing to provide feedback on the policy covering swimming carnivals, and now extended to aquatic activity days at either a swimming pool or water park.

I have attached the policy document, the Procedures and Checklists are currently being written to reflect the major changes in the policy listed below. I have also included a flow chart that covers our thinking around the sorts of decisions schools will need to be making in their planning, any thoughts on it usability and would also be appreciated.

The key changes to the previous draft policy are:

- The policy statement has been strengthened to reflect the Directorate's intent to encourage maximum student participation in aquatic activities.
- The policy scope has been revised to include swimming pool and water park aquatic based events and associated aquatic activities. The new policy name will be *Swimming Pool and Water Park Based Aquatic Activities Policy*.
- Unstructured water activities such as water play are able to be run at aquatic events with appropriate proficiency testing and risk management.
- The Royal Life Saving Society Survival Challenge Proficiency Test continues to be mandatory for all unstructured aquatic activities except when the unstructured aquatic activity is conducted in water depth below a student's waist.

I look forward to hearing your feedback, as discussed, if you could email me back on the morning of Friday 18 January it would be much appreciated.

Cheers,  
Martin

Martin Hine/Principal/Curriculum Support/VET in Schools

Phone: +61 2 6205 4685 | Fax: +61 2 6205 9340 | Mob: [REDACTED] Email: [martin.hine@act.gov.au](mailto:martin.hine@act.gov.au)

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Hine, Martin

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 17 January 2013 10:07 PM  
**To:** Hine, Martin  
**Subject:** RE: Swimming Pool and Water Park Aquatic Activities Policy

G'day Martin,

I have had a look over the two attachments that you forwarded me and they look pretty good. There are a couple of things I thought were worth a mention.

1. I think the flowchart is clear and easy to follow. However it might be worth mentioning there or perhaps somewhere in the policy exactly how records of proficiency are expected to be kept. Is there a spot on MAZE? In addition to this once a student has passed a proficiency test (perhaps in year 7 at the swimming carnival) does this mean they don't have to do another test for the remainder of their high school years. I think there is a little uncertainty over this.
2. Under Requirements, point 4.7 states that a non proficient swimmer can only engage in unstructured water activities in water up to their waist. I think this is a sensible rule to follow. However in the previous policy there was much that contradicted this in the checklists section. I tried to follow the link at the end of the new document to view the updated checklists. Unfortunately I could not find these anywhere. I would assume that these checklists would be updated in accordance with the new policy. These will need to be posted on the web before this policy is released to schools.

Other than these two small issues I think it looks pretty good and captures the essence of what was discussed in the meeting that I attended at the end of term 4.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

*School Swimming Pool and Water Park Based Aquatic Activities Procedures and Checklists*

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**From:** Hine, Martin [mailto:Martin.Hine@act.gov.au]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 17 January 2013 12:19 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: Swimming Pool and Water Park Aquatic Activities Policy

Hi [REDACTED]

Thank you for agreeing to provide feedback on the policy covering swimming carnivals, and now extended to aquatic activity days at either a swimming pool or water park.

I have attached the policy document, the Procedures and Checklists are currently being written to reflect the major changes in the policy listed below. I have also included a flow chart that covers our thinking around the sorts of decisions schools will need to be making in their planning, any thoughts on its usability and would also be appreciated.

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I look forward to hearing your feedback, as discussed, if you could email me back on the morning of Friday 18 January it would be much appreciated.

Cheers,  
Martin

Martin Hine/Principal/Curriculum Support/VET in Schools

Phone: +61 2 6205 4685 | Fax: +61 2 6205 9340 | Mob: [REDACTED] Email: [martin.hine@act.gov.au](mailto:martin.hine@act.gov.au)

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**Hine, Martin**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, 21 January 2013 9:21 AM  
**To:** Hine, Martin  
**Subject:** Swimming policy feedback  
**Attachments:** Swimming Carnival Policy feedback form.doc

Good morning Martin,  
Attached is feedback from [REDACTED] about the draft swimming policy. I understand that the cutoff date was brought forward but I did not actually receive a new date. I hope I am not too late.

I believe the policy is a good idea and [REDACTED] has been doing majority of the guidelines for a few years now. While on the whole we think the policy is easy to follow we have made a few comments in the last section of the feedback form.

If you would like to discuss the comments please do not hesitate to call me when school returns.

## Swimming Carnival Policy, Procedures and Checklists Consultation feedback form

Dear Stakeholder

Thank you for taking the time to review the interim *Swimming Carnival Policy, Procedures and Checklists* and providing feedback to assist the ACT Education and Training Directorate ensuring the policy and procedures are clear, relevant and meet the needs of stakeholders.

Please answer the following questions and provide any further feedback in the space provided. When you have completed the feedback form please return via return email to [Martin.Hine@act.gov.au](mailto:Martin.Hine@act.gov.au) before the feedback closing date of 22/02/2013.

1. The interim *Swimming Carnival Policy, Procedures and Checklists* is relevant and provides good guidance on the roles and responsibilities associated with swimming carnival planning and implementation.

Agree	Don't know	Disagree
-------	------------	----------

If you circled disagree, please comment on how you think the document could be improved.

2. The information in the interim *Swimming Carnival Policy, Procedures and Checklists* is clear and unambiguous?

Agree	Don't know	Disagree
-------	------------	----------

If you circled disagree, please comment on how you think the document could be improved

3. The interim *Swimming Carnival Policy, Procedures and Checklists* document was easy to follow.

Agree	Don't know	Disagree
-------	------------	----------

If you circled disagree, please comment on how you think the document could be improved.

4. Please provide any other feedback or general comments?

It is certainly necessary to produce a swimming policy with clear guidelines and procedures to ensure the safety of the students, staff and parents. In principle the policy is a good idea and easy to follow, however, after reviewing the policy and attending a swimming fun day at the end of 2012, below are a few things that need to be clarified.

- Considering swimming ability test results are to be put on a data base, how long is the test current for? Do students have to be tested every swimming activity or does the test cover them for a period like 12 months? (unless of course non proficient swimmers request to be retested as they may have had lessons)
- Is the two band identification enough? Those deemed non proficient can in fact be non swimmers or weak swimmers yet they are still allowed in the same areas. Are there water depth restrictions or slide use restrictions for non proficient swimmers? Perhaps a third group – NO BANDS could be for non swimmers who would not be allowed in any water based events. This would also ensure that any student actually wanting to go in water based activities must get tested or they cannot enter the water at all.
- Can the roll marking procedures be reduced? 5 seems a bit of overkill. It seems to work having one at school, one at the end of the carnival (before getting on the buses) and one back at school.
- The 5 tests will cause schools concern due to the amount of time it would take to perform them properly. Can the treading water be shortened? Can the voice rescue be taken out (this seems to take the longest) particularly with the staff and lifesaver supervision required?
- Can the Information sent home to parents be condensed as there are a lot of pages as it currently stands?

The policy should be presented in such a way that schools do not opt out of swimming carnivals or water activities (because they see it as too onerous or difficult) as students need to know about water safety. Many leisure activities are water based and many students will miss out on water experiences if they are not done at schools.